

# **Leadership for Equity and Excellence**

**Crossing the Divide  
in Cyprus's Diverse Schools**

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## **Abstract**

Leaders in Cyprus face a daunting challenge in their quest to create positive change in schools: how to lead across difference. As schools face the challenges of demographic shifts thereby contributing to new patterns of diverse schools this thesis fills a growing need for empirical research of this recent history and its effects on leadership. Leadership for equity and excellence examines how principals pursue equity and excellence in the schools of Cyprus. It is argued that illuminating the relationship between diversity and leadership can advance understanding of how leadership for equity and excellence happens in practice. Given the importance of investigating further this relationship, preparing leaders for a changing world is needed. Without such preparation, these leaders stand to enter schools ill equipped for participation in diverse environments. Using a case study research design, the study draws upon interview, observation and survey data from four schools to develop four richly detailed case studies. From within-case and cross-case analysis of the four cases, elements integral to leading these schools are highlighted. The study found a number of practices that constitute core leadership principles: using values and principles as a guidance system for self and others, fighting complacency, mobilising and inspiring followers in collective action, and engaging in social identity issues to eliminate conflict. They are concerned with bringing all groups together without eliminating their differences. The study highlights the main limitations of Cyprus's current leadership programme and proposes new ways of creating and implementing effective programmes for developing expert school leaders. Finally, the study calls for studies that employ different research methods and factors influencing leadership experience in diverse schools thereby equipping researchers with the tools to better explain how diversity influences leadership practices.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of reference and bibliography): 93, 399

*This thesis is dedicated to*  
*St. Marina*  
*and to my parents*  
*Orthodoxos and Loukia Orthodoxou*



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## Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my dearest and most demanding tutor Megan Crawford. I have benefited enormously from her generous support and feedback. Her invaluable time and intellectual effort has made this thesis possible. I also wish to thank her for her helpful and always constructive comments on drafts of this thesis. I also want to thank Professor Peter Earley for his valuable comments and corrections.

I am also thankful to Professor John Fitz who persuaded me to apply for a PhD and for his advice and support on parts of this thesis. I give deep thanks to George Karroullas at the University of Cyprus for his inspiration as well as his crucial support and advice during the final stages of this thesis.

This thesis grew from the stories of educators in Primary schools in Cyprus. I am grateful to the many people who allowed me to interview them and to reference what I have learned. For the trust they placed in me, I am deeply appreciative.

Finally I give my deepest thanks to my family. The dedication of this thesis to my parents, Orthodoxos and Loukia Orthodoxou, is a small token of my thanks for their support of my studies in education. My sister, Diamando Christoforou, restored my hope each new day. I could never have reached the end without her. And also her husband, Lefteris Christoforou, for his support and his example of engaged work in social justice. I am also grateful to George and Sofia Orthodoxou for their encouragement. My nephew and niece, Panayiotis and Loukia Christoforou – two young adolescents who are starting to think and discuss about pluralism in education - for their unceasing support and for giving me hope for the next generation. And also the youngest in the family, my niece Marita Orthodoxou, and my Goddaughter and niece Loukiana Orthodoxou who bring daily joy.

## CHAPTER

# 1

## Introduction to the Issues

Educational leaders of many countries live in a world of diversity in which they are now called to make profound and innovative changes in their schools. In Cyprus, when school leaders hear phrases such as ‘changing demographics’, ‘changing populations’, ‘new census data’, their minds often go directly to the issue of how they will develop high-quality education for children from linguistically diverse backgrounds. As demographic changes alter the cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic make-up of school populations, the quest for leadership that is committed to and is engaged in a dynamic interplay between equity and excellence has become a critical issue and will determine the future of schools (Brown, 2004; Warikoo and Carter, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). On the excellence side, school leaders strive for excellence in quality teaching and learning as a way of developing sophisticated skills, knowledge and attitudes that allow individuals, communities and organisations to innovate continuously in order to adapt to our fast-changing world. Working in tandem with this, principals build stable relationships across the school community by bringing groups together without trying to eliminate their differences.

Although much of the extant research has focused on the significance of leadership in diverse contexts (Lumby and Coleman, 2007; Shields and Sayani, 2005; Vedoy and Moller, 2007; 2000), less attention has been given to how leaders mobilise and motivate people to work with diversity. In addition, the very limited body of empirical work that exists on leadership and diversity is concentrated outside of Cyprus’s education context. Also, little research has been conducted on how to develop leaders competent enough to lead diverse schools. To address these gaps, this thesis focuses on *how* leaders who are committed to

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equity and excellence deal with differences in the context of Cyprus. Given that diversity work is so complex, this thesis also offers extensive research pertaining to leadership preparation of schools leaders in Cyprus. In order to develop leaders who have the capacity and will to educate children in a skilful way, one needs to understand what leadership means. For the purposes of this research the following two questions were considered:

- What is the role of leadership in developing equity and excellence in the diverse schools of Cyprus? How do leaders address the key issues?
- How can effective leaders be developed to lead such schools?

In answering these questions two predominantly minority schools and two diverse or integrated primary schools were selected for case studies. All four schools were primary schools. The four schools are all diverse, complicated and subject to a wide range of internal and external impulses. Leading equity and excellence in diverse schools is complex and difficult when individuals differ in their values, styles of verbal and non-verbal communication, orientations towards authority and any number of other habits and inclinations that vary with culture (DiTomaso and Hooijberg, 1996). Although the schools under study have all received an award for keeping youth away from risk, they still have more work to do. They are all in various stages of learning how to develop equity and excellence. All four schools have identified new ideas to try and are making a variety of efforts to understand the effects of these new ideas on student learning. In order to support the thousands of diverse schools effectively one needs to have a deep understanding of the work of leaders in each school. It is my belief that fieldwork is not a passive activity (Coffey, 1999) and only by getting to know their particular struggles and hopes one is able to move towards a better understanding of leadership. The aim of this research is not simply to identify successful practices and then assume that they have application for every other school. This research is about details, about the experience of effective leadership in four schools that showed some signs of improvement.



## 1.1 My Own Voice

My home environment has exposed me to racial and ethnic diversity at a very early age as it has brought me into close contact with people from diverse backgrounds and taught me the importance of working effectively with individuals whose norms, preferences, beliefs, styles and values are quite different from our own. My secondary education at a private English-speaking school also increased my interaction with other racial backgrounds to a great extent. The schools' multicultural curriculum invited me to explore different cultures and realities in great depth. In addition, collaboration with peers and teachers of different ethnic backgrounds has enabled me to step confidently into the larger world.

Although I gained several advantages of being exposed to diversity from an early age, my transition to university and the exposure to racial diversity at the university level facilitated a state of disequilibrium during my first week in the UK. While the number of international and students within the European Community at the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University was considerably low, the campus-life was extremely diverse. Breaking from ingrained scripts and habits of mind have caused me anxiety and discomfort, but it was this anxiety and discomfort that stimulated my thinking. I felt that I was forced to negotiate and process discrepancies between my experiences in university and what I had been accustomed to my home environment.

The university has provided me with an opportunity to experiment with new ideas, new relationships and new roles. My interactions with students outside the university context were also particularly valuable. More specifically, my campus environment provided me with an opportunity to learn from peers with cultures, values and experiences that I haven't been exposed to before despite my previous experience with other diverse peers. My experience with diversity so far has taught me that in a hostile racial climate, relationships between different groups suffer, and people are unlikely to experience the confrontation with diversity and complexity that enhances thinking processes, stimulates developmental growth

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and prepares people for life in a diverse society.

After graduation I had the opportunity to pursue my teacher training in Cyprus and work as a teacher in primary schools. During this time I worked for some time in schools and communities across Cyprus both in the public and private sector and gather input from a wide array of educators, parents and students. One of the issues that struck my attention was that not only newcomer immigrant students were entering schools in unprecedented numbers but also they faced a number of challenges in their adjustment and their academic achievement. Newcomer students who entered mid-way through their education career in early adolescence, for example, were expected to master a new language (something that typically takes five to seven years under optimal circumstances), while also learning explicit and implicit curriculum their native-born peers have been exposed to over their course of their entire educational experience. In these schools, few if any adults spoke their languages, represented their culture, or were prepared to teach across language differences.

As minority students lacked Greek-language proficiency, minority students were often referred by leaders as 'listeners' and not as engaged, capable students. Designed for homogeneity, Greek-Cypriot student population schools rarely adjusted to language minority students; these students were left on their own to understand what was expected of them, to learn the appropriate ways of thinking and expressing thought in school, and to draw connections and bridge discontinuities between their experiences at home and what they learned at school. Consequently newcomer immigrant children entered an education system that failed to consider their particular needs or realities. While engagement in cross-racial interaction during my education years demonstrated the value of diversity; i.e. lasting pluralistic orientation, these students entered an education system to quickly discover that their home cultures and languages were viewed as deficient. Students' home cultures, native languages and ways of thinking and communicating thoughts were often treated as obstacles to their learning and impediments to their academic development. To succeed in schools and later in

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society, minority students were thus pressured to abandon their home cultures and adopt the mainstream culture.

In the light of students' experiences in diverse schools, the need for committed, hopeful leadership has become apparent. My early interest in leadership began with leaders who were committed in bringing together different groups, with different perspectives and often mutual mistrust, in stable and productive relations. By their words, their own example, and the structures and processes they put in place, these leaders turned differences into sources of strength. However, I have also worked with leaders who did not have a clear, accurate understanding of the degree of inequity present in their own schools. In addition, they rarely examined these areas or devised ways to eliminate these inequities. These leaders have yet to find a unifying force that not only brings peaceful coexistence amongst diverse groups, but it makes learning about different groups and their experiences and perspectives an integral part of the school's mission. It has become clear that Cyprus's schools need leadership that mobilises the collective will to alter the cultural and structural conditions that impede progress towards equity and excellence.

Leadership is widely thought to be a powerful force for school effectiveness. Day et al. (2009) found that 'successful school leaders improve teaching and learning, and thus pupil outcomes, indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, teaching practices and through developing teachers' capacities for leadership (p. 2). Although this research has identified the contributions of leaders in diverse settings, leadership practices in the highly centralised character of Cyprus's educational system require more empirical research. In fact, several authors have acknowledged the general importance of situational contingencies (Vroom and Jago, 2007) as contextual circumstances in determining leadership. In addition, research has also focused in Western contexts (Lumby et al., 2009). But leaders are socialised into and internalise the cultural values and practices of the culture they grow up in (Javidan et al., 2009).

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Given global economic developments and emerging numbers of immigrants, (Shweder, Minow and Markus, 2002) argue that people's hidden assumptions about the scope and the limits of tolerance for cultural diversity in different countries are likely to vary. In, fact, liberal democratic nations do not come to terms with cultural differences in identical ways. Despite Cyprus's history with other cultural groups, only relatively recently has it recognised diversity as a matter of overt discussion – meaning that people do not have to pretend that differences do not exist and can be overt about mentioning them. Considering that there are more dimensions of difference, studying leadership in the Cyprus context becomes conceptually satisfying. At a practical level, a lack of attention to these factors and the dynamic that they produce can create problems in the development of the leaders of tomorrow.

My experiences and my own desire for social change align with tradition and descriptions of qualitative research. A qualitative approach to research aims to understand how individuals make meaning of their social world. The social world is not something independent of individual perceptions but is created through social interactions of individuals with the world around them. This approach is committed to multiple views of social reality whereby a researcher's respondent becomes 'the expert' – it is his or her view of reality that the researcher seeks to interpret. Social reality is assumed to be subjective and varied; there is not just one story but multiple stories of lived experience. One primary method of a qualitative approach involves reflection and listening with the goal of empowering and giving voice to respondents' experiences. Most of all, a qualitative approach favours the exploration of the process of human meaning making.

Taking a qualitative approach, I assume a subjective reality that consists of stories or meanings grounded in 'natural' settings. I believe that there is no 'objective' social reality 'out there'. In qualitative research one can only draw analytical but not practical lines between research and researcher, 'reality' and making sense of it, data and their interpretation, social science and social

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practice. The question, therefore, is not how to exclude the human factor in research but how to cope with the possible downside of subjectivity. The researcher can contribute a large part to coping with that problem mainly by making one's own (implicit) assumptions, interests and objectives concerning the research and social practice as explicit as possible and to acknowledge, where relevant, one's own philosophical and political perspectives (Pyett, 2003).

So far, I have recognised my feelings and experiences about the research and its subjects as well as my theoretical orientations. This process is important in order to avoid infusing bias into the study and obstructing the true nature of the research process and the data it produces. In neutralising this concern Sherman (2002) called on the researcher to be introspective and as honest as possible so as to understand his or her own biases in conducting the study. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way I view and understand the data I collect and the way I interpret my experiences. I realised that, as Coffey says, 'fieldwork can be recast as a process where the self is central' (1999, p. 24). Similarly, Brown (1996) notes that:

people and their interactions are more than a collection of objective, measurable facts; they are seen and interpreted through the researcher's frame – that is, how she or he organizes the details of an interaction, attributes meaning to them, and decides (consciously or unconsciously) what is important and what is of secondary importance or irrelevant. (p.16)

My argument is that researchers are necessarily embedded into their research activities even if they are striving to ensure 'objective rigor' in the development and application of their academic studies. To argue otherwise would be to ignore the inevitable social content of interaction – for example, within the context of a face-to-face interview. Multicultural theories believe that the values, personal histories, attitudes, and beliefs of researchers cannot be separated from the knowledge they create (Code, 1991; Harding, 1998). Similarly, I also reject positivist claims of disinterested and distancing knowledge production.

I contend that studying leadership in the Cyprus context has many benefits,

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including expanding on existing theories and understanding the environment in which behaviour occurs. It is my belief that diverse schools in Cyprus are an interesting and powerful place to learn about leadership. I set out to explore how leaders inspire action and guide people in developing equity in their schools. Thus the two key premises motivated the study. The first is that leadership makes a difference. Dramatic change in public schools will simply not happen without systematic efforts to improve school leadership. The second premise is that schools are hindered in providing effective education for all students, in part due to a lack of support for developing such leadership.

The research questions address both scholarly and practical audiences. I want to provide scholars, practising educators, policy makers and graduate students with important research, theory and practice related to leadership in diverse schools and the education of minority groups in Cyprus. I believe that my understanding of Cyprus's educational context and my previous role in it enhances my awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many of the challenges, decisions and issues that leaders have to address in diverse schools. I also bring knowledge of both the structure of primary education and the role of principals in schools more generally. For those concerned about making their schools more successful and equitable places, the thesis offers numerous practical lessons for leaders and professionals at all levels. It is hoped that the significant, timely and trenchant topic of this thesis will have the influence on educational policy makers and practitioners in Cyprus. By answering these questions my aim is to add to the knowledge base in Cyprus and the field more generally.

### **1.2 The Context of Cyprus Education**

The Cypriot educational system is highly centralised. The highest authority rests with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). The educational policy is decided by the Cabinet of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education and Culture. The educational policy, therefore (e.g. curriculum, textbooks, school schedule, school staffing and promotions to administrative posts), is centrally decided and implemented. The implementation of the

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educational policy is supervised and assessed by school inspectors. Appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions and discipline of all teaching personnel are the responsibility of the Educational Service Commission, a five-member independent body appointed by the President of Cyprus for a six year period (MOEC, 2001).

Local School Boards are committees formed by 5–11 elected members of each community or district and serve for a period of five years. The government has given them the responsibility to administrate schools in their district. They undertake the financial management of schools and cooperate with the schools' principals to achieve their best operation. Local School Boards manage schools' budgets; give suggestions about the reallocation of pupils in the district's schools and are responsible for school buildings and equipment. Their role is similar to the role of educational authorities in England because they both are transitional agents between central authority and schools. Principals hold the most critical posts in Cypriot schools as they are responsible for their school's operation and functioning, both in the educational and in the administration sector. Their duties include class teaching; guidance, evaluation and reporting of the teachers' work; collaboration with the Local School Board; writing down and submitting schools' needs to be included in the following year's budget; managing any money given by the Board or Parents Association; and handling the schools' paperwork and mail (Law 223 of 1997).

One of the worst parts of the problem is the rigid and incompetent bureaucracies that schools in Cyprus have to deal with. The school system is one whose traditions, structure and operations subvert the organisational mission. With no one to enforce adherence to the school's main mission, the organisation gets changed to serve the needs of various internal constituents. The organisational characteristics that result are:

- overcentralisation, the development of many levels in the chain of command, and an upward orientation of anxious subordinates

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- vertical and horizontal fragmentation, isolating units from one another and limiting communication and coordination of functions
- the consequent development of chauvinism within particular units, reflected in actions to protect and expand their power
- the exercise of strong, informal pressure from peers within units to conform to their codes, geared toward political protection and expansion and ignoring the organisation's wider goals
- compulsive rule following and rule enforcing (Roger, 1969, p. 268)

It seems that MOEC examines and controls all actions taken by the regional educational organisations through administrative supervision. This centralisation of power creates a number of problems, including a fragmented decision-making process. Such structures are characterised as bureaucracies arranged into hierarchies with top-down leadership isolating teachers and creating a culture that negatively impacts education quality and systematic school change (Williams, Cate and O'Hair, 2009). In turn, school leaders heavily rely on a hierarchy of authority, on policies and regulations, and on coercive mechanisms for coordination and control risk encumbering the costs associated with overstandardisation of work processes – costs such as reductions in worker satisfaction, motivation, commitment and creativity (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2002). These highly bureaucratic structures are also likely to inhibit the adaptations necessary in a changing external environment.

The fragmentation, unit chauvinism and complexity of the hierarchy guarantee that information cannot flow smoothly from one part of the organisation to another. Moreover, the policy makers who enact paper directives do not have the necessary knowledge about what is happening in schools. It is a system that has been shaped to serve the career interests of those who staff it, and not students' educational interests. Despite the centralised character of the educational system, paradoxically at the school level there is considerable autonomy. Each school is entitled to develop its own action plan, based on the aforementioned guidelines, and teachers have the right to put forward their own teaching methods.



### **1.2.1 The Cypriot Reality**

Originally, Cyprus, despite being a small island, was an intersection of cultures and civilisations. The island has for centuries been home to the ethnic groups of Greek-Cypriots (the largest proportion in numbers of the country) and Turkish-Cypriots. Special groups such as the Maronites, Armenians and Latins, have been incorporated into the Greek-Cypriot community according to article two of the Constitutions of the Republic of Cyprus; after acquiring Cypriot nationality, the members of these religious groups were recognised as Cypriot citizens and now enjoy the same rights as other Cypriots; which are the outcomes of their state and religious identity. The Cyprus Government, within the framework of constitutional and legal requests from the above religious groups has committed to provide them with all the facilities relevant to their educational and religious needs. In addition to a complete respect for their religious freedom, the basic principles of human rights, including tolerance, lack of discrimination, varied information and of the right to vote for special policies, are also involved, such as the foundation and support for the Armenian School Melconian, the establishment of a Maronite School in 2002, the enrolment of students from these groups at the University of Cyprus as well as the creation of places of worship.

These groups are recognised groups who have ensured rights and obligations and clearly established rights to live safely within the boundaries of the Republic of Cyprus. The thesis will focus on other groups and specifically that of newcomer immigrants.

### **1.2.2 Multicultural Education in Cyprus**

Recent statistics show that about 9% of the pupils attending Public Schools do not speak Greek as their mother language (MOEC, 2008). This is happening at a time when students are immersed in Eurocentric, nationalistic curricula developed outside minority contexts. The present curriculum ignores First Nations languages, traditions and knowledge, their rich ecological and spiritual understanding and their ways of comprehending the humanities and sciences. With only one language being made the official language of Cypriots, that is,

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Greek, the educational outcomes of 'success' of students from the dominant group have as a consequence that minority students have lost their ancestral language and culture, and their connections to their family and community. Therefore, literacy and schooling have not been, and are not now, relevant or connected to the experience of minority students. At the same time neighbourhoods are becoming more segregated than ever, the streets, organised crime and youth gangs have framed a chilling learning environment for youth who search for nourishment, purpose and guidance, having lost their languages, norms, cultures and participation in a supportive community. The lack of a thriving economy in minority communities and the persistent discrimination within the wider context further restrict learning opportunities for students in Cyprus.

The MOEC in its effort to promote tolerance and dialogue and in order to eliminate stereotypes through education has set in place the programme for Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP). The policy for the ZEPs derived from the strategy of positive discrimination (UNESCO), which is based on the unequal treatment of inequalities. Each ZEP consists of one Gymnasium (lower secondary school), the main primary schools in its capture area and the main kindergartens linked with these primary schools, in degraded areas with a pupil population coming from families of a low socioeconomic and educational level. The criteria for defining an area as ZEP is a high record of school failure and functional illiteracy in the area's school units, a high share of migrant or foreign language speaking pupils, a high number of drop-outs and high incidence of violent and anti-social behaviour (young delinquency).

The MOEC provides additional resources to the vulnerable groups of schools which are included in the ZEP. Some of the ZEP specific objectives are:

- the democratic school that functions for the social inclusion of all children and for combating dropping out of the system and social exclusion

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- a school system that respects difference, pluralism (cultural, language, religious) and multiple intelligence
- the reduction of functional illiteracy until completion of primary education and its elimination until the end of the ten year compulsory education
- the elimination of the drop-out phenomenon, especially during the years of compulsory education
- the drastic reduction of school failure at all levels of education.

Some of the actions taken within the framework of ZEPs include:

- reduction in the number of children per classroom
- employment of teachers speaking the mother tongue of foreign language speaking pupils
- offer of free meals to underprivileged pupils of the kindergartens and primary schools
- offer of afternoon activities (groups, clubs) at the Gymnasiums included in ZEPs
- posting of two educationists in each ZEP as coordinators
- all-day functioning of the primary schools and Gymnasiums covered by ZEPs.

The impact of ZEPs is yet not known. In the UK, similar ZEPs were set up mainly in inner cities to bring schools, communities and business closer together. The impact of 'Excellence in Cities', as they were later termed, varied by ethnic group and gender. Some Indian and Black African girls seem to make greater progress than similar non-Excellence in Cities pupils (DES, 2005).

### **1.2.3 Leadership Development in Cyprus**

In Cyprus, the selection of school principals has been based on criteria that typically do not correspond with the skills and abilities that new principals need for the effective administration of schools. Principal selection has been

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influenced far more by political considerations than by technical-professional competencies.

In Cyprus, teachers can enter the competition for principalships only after completing twelve years of satisfactory teaching service. All teachers receive an evaluation after completion of their twelfth year of teaching and every second year thereafter from the school inspector. The evaluation covers four factors: professional training; effectiveness on the job; organisation, administration, human relations, and general behaviour and actions.

Cyprus has two levels of assistant principal certificates: a more junior level (assistant principal B) and a more senior level (assistant principal A). The prerequisites for advancing to the principalship position include at least two years serving as assistant principal B and one year as assistant principal A. Teachers who want to become assistant principal B have to apply when available positions are announced by the MOEC. All the applications are reviewed by the committee of inspectors, usually consisting of three members. Each candidate receives points based on the mean of the grades earned in the last two evaluations multiplied by four, the mean of the grades attained in the last decade of evaluations, and the years of service (one point for every year). A second degree receives two units, postgraduate study receives three units and a doctorate degree receives five units. When the final list of applicants is compiled, the eligible candidates for assistant principal B must be interviewed by the Committee of Educational Service, which is appointed by the President of the Republic. This committee is appointed for a five-year term.

During the interview process, the committee can give up to five points. These points are based on the following measurable criteria: (1) knowledge of pedagogical and methodological subjects (1 point), (2) comprehension of the role and responsibilities of the principal (1 point), (3) critical analysis of administrative and organisational problems in relation to the role's duties and responsibilities (1 point), (4) effectiveness in communication and sufficiency of

documentation (1 point), (5) personality –comfortable presence, adaptability, flexibility (0.5 points), and (6) language proficiency –vocabulary, syntax, expression (0.5 points). Those who receive the highest scores are promoted to the level of assistant principal B. Usually these individuals are teachers who have been evaluated three or four times and have had many years of teaching experience. Evaluations for the position of assistant principal A also take into account evaluations done at the level of assistant principal B. After promotion to the principalship, principals are required to attend the Programme of Training for Principals provided by the Pedagogical Institute, which consists of fifteen meetings. Assistant principals attend a similar programme, consisting of twenty-six meetings. In addition to the assistant principal A and B apprenticeships, Cypriot principals attend a special seminar before beginning their new duties, which promotes a smooth socialisation and integration into the new role.

Applications for primary school principalships can be submitted only by those who have served as assistant principals for three years. Applications for secondary school principalships can be submitted only by those who have served as assistant principal B for at least two years and subsequently for at least one year as assistant principal A. Thus, all aspiring principals have to have a significant amount of apprenticeship and preparation for the role. There are a number of critiques of the Cypriot system for the appointment of principals (Pashiardis, 2004). The main disadvantage of this system is the importance of years of teaching service. Because of this, we often see capable members of the educational community excluded from the principalship when colleagues with more years of experience take available openings. This has resulted in people getting promoted to the principalship only shortly before their retirement. Another disadvantage is a general perception that the evaluations of inspectors are biased idiosyncratically as well as politically. Moreover, long periods of socialisation before taking up a principalship apparently contribute to conservative outlooks, maintenance of the status quo and a lack of readiness for emerging demands of the role.

### **1.3 The Importance of Leadership in Pursuing Equity and Excellence**

Educating more people and educating them better appears to be the best way to improve economic opportunity and to reduce inequities in society (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). In a global economy a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity, but it is a prerequisite. Central to people's collective future is the recognition that their capacity to survive and thrive depends on ensuring to all people what should be an unquestioned entitlement – a rich and inalienable right to learn. It is therefore imperative to establish a purposeful, equitable education system that will prepare all students for success in a knowledge-based society. There is an educational value to the presence in classrooms and on campuses of a diverse student population, with diversity measured along many dimensions (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010).

The most obvious barrier to minority group's education is schooling. The capacity to distinguish groups from one another is manifested during the early years of life. By the age of five children have already begun to adopt stances towards the groups from which they feel excluded and/or the groups to which they do not wish to belong. In other words, when students enter schools, they are already aware that they are 'minorities' and also that there is a difference between a minority group and majority group. It is no wonder that researchers urge educators to confront directly the value of diversity, the cost of diversity and the infinitely greater costs of 'universality' during the early years of school. As Gardner et al. (2005) note:

During the early years of school, such issues are best approached through experiences in which members of different groups work together on common projects, come to know one another first-hand, deal with differences in an amicable manner, and discover that a perspective may be different without being deficient. (p. 14)

If education fails to embark on the road of equity and try to move its students to

this road, by adulthood the majority of members share the same beliefs, attitudes, values and emotions.

Moreover, the obstacles to equity cannot be overcome when minority students are more likely to be poor. Even where there are no problems in their own families, poor neighbourhoods abound in the dysfunction of others. Cyprus, the previous homogeneous country – with the majority being middle-class – has not only become diverse but also segregated. Schools not only remain middle-class institutions but they enforce middle-class values. In even the very best schools, teachers are wary of the disruptions caused when students explode with the tensions of the problems they cannot handle. But problems escalate when schools affirm such tensions and cause even more.

Immigrant minority children continue to enter schools in Cyprus in unprecedented numbers, making them a fast-growing segment of the youth population. The percentage of minority students attending Cyprus's Public Elementary Schools for the academic year 2007–2008 rose to 8% and continues to increase (MOEC, 2010). Minority students not only bring remarkable strengths, including strong family ties, deep-seated beliefs in education and optimism about the future, but they also face a range of challenges associated with the migration to a new country, including high levels of poverty (Capps et al., 2005), experiences of racism and discrimination (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix and Clewell, 2001; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001), and exposure to school and community violence (Garcia-Coll and Magnuson, 1997). These stressors complicate minority students' adjustment to new schools and community settings and tax the coping capacities of even the most robust minority adolescents, leaving them vulnerable to academic failure. Although a number of studies have demonstrated that minority youth have more positive attitudes toward their schools (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 1995), hold higher aspirations (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001), and are more optimistic about the future (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) than their native-born peers, many perform poorly on a variety of academic indicators, including achievement tests, grades, drop-out rates and

college enrolment (Gandara, 1994).

These demographic changes, along with the persistent opportunity gaps for minority students, have changed the role of today's educators. In particular, they must raise the outcomes of top-performing students against international benchmarks while at the same time accelerate the learning of students who are behind so that they eventually perform at top levels, too. Cyprus's schools still have to make progress on the dual dimensions of equity and excellence. Although Cyprus attracts the strongest undergraduate applicants in the teaching profession, the country's demographics had shifted so rapidly throughout the 1990s that educators were faced with the troubling reality that their training left them highly unprepared to lead these schools. A recent study by Childress, Doyle and Thomas (2009) showed that change is possible even in the most lowest performing urban schools in the country. Specifically, a number of schools achieved proficiency rates above 90% and high schools doubled the number of minority students passing Advanced Placement exams. How did they do it? Their work reflects on what the district did to develop a strategy, build stakeholder support, invest in its people, create structures for support and accountability and change its culture. But most importantly, when employees were asked for the key to success, employees at all levels of the system answered 'professional development'. Given the importance of leadership and leadership development, this study looks at these issues in greater depth.

### **1.4 Advancing Leadership Theory and Practice**

With schools facing new realities, scholars and practitioners have called for a new way of leading. This research has set out to explore leadership for equity and excellence because schools face important challenges for which the current repertoire of strategies for managing diverse relationships still does not suffice (Heifetz, 2009; Ospina and Su, 2009; Pittinsky and Montoya, 2009). Leaders, I will suggest, need to develop new forms of improvisational expertise; a kind of process expertise that knows how to experiment prudently with never-been-tried-before relationships, means of communication and ways of interacting with



## Chapter One: Introduction to the Issues

diverse groups. As was noted earlier, while some research has shown that leaders are very influential in leading equity and excellence, surprisingly few studies have explored how leaders can influence these outcomes associated with diversity. To fill this gap the goal of this thesis is to provide a clear understanding of leadership for equity and excellence in the diverse schools of Cyprus and in doing so to convey its multiple meanings, units of analysis and complexity.

One key theme that reverberates throughout this thesis is leaders' confidence in dealing with diversity issues despite inertia and constraints. The reality is that many problems are embedded in complicated and interactive contexts and systems. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) argue that external actors impose very specific expectations on what the organisation should be doing. The culture and structure of an organisation are all inertia forces that reduce the principal's ability to take actions that tend to impact the organisation (Hannan and Freeman, 1989). Factors that tie a principal's hands in practice cannot be ignored, especially when one explores the work of principals in the context of Cyprus, which is highly hierarchical, and the lack opportunities and constraints that have become a reality. Moreover, the existing power relationships and long tenures have caused attitudes and behaviours to become increasingly institutionalised.

Although such external forces may indeed impact organisational life over time, the influence of leadership in absolute terms is also substantial. And it is not substantial just because leadership impacts student or organisational performance, but because leadership infuses purpose and meaning into the lives of all individuals working in the school environment. The art of leadership is to inspire action and guide people in meaningful directions. In the process, principals cultivate a growing cadre of leaders (teachers, parents and community), as they are more likely to help expand the reach of those goals that are meaningful than those which are not and, thus, share overall responsibility for improvement. At the same time leaders must be deeply attuned to multiple contexts and situations, as they can no longer take for granted that people will

think the same way or share a perspective. This study suggests that a way forward is to find a form of leadership that will challenge both leaders and followers to face problems that require learning in new ways. Making progress demands leaders engaging in systematic processes of assessing themselves and the situation and then taking action. These challenges are the subject of this thesis.

Apart from the situation that surrounds the leader, it is also my belief that leadership is a dynamic and complex whole based on our relationships with others. It involves willing collaboration between leaders, followers and other constituents. This could not apply less in diverse contexts where everyone in the organisation is required to seize opportunities in order to take the initiative towards equity and excellence in their locale.

## **1.5 Leadership Development**

In response to the increasing diversity of schools, educators, policy makers and researchers have called for educational efforts aimed at educating principals to address the needs of high-need communities (Anderson, 2009; Bush, 2008; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Lumby and Coleman, 2007). These leaders need to know how to design and create the schools of the future, and not just administer the schools of the past. Exactly how this goal is implemented, however, is unclear. As Evans (2007b) notes:

most school leaders are not taught or trained to deal with socio-political or sociocultural matters; nor are they knowledgeable of their role and influence in shaping and defining meaning on issues of race, class, gender, and other areas of difference for and with other school members (p. 316).

Despite the obvious importance of school leaders, research is still needed as to what makes an effective leader in diverse schools. Riehl (2000) has argued that school leaders must be prepared to foster 'new meanings about diversity', promote 'inclusive school cultures and instructional programs' and build

'relationships between schools and communities' (p. 55). Others have argued that teachers need support from leaders in examining their classroom practices for possible bias (Riehl, 2000; Rusch, 1998). What is very clear is that leadership can be taught (e.g. Bush, 2008) and high-quality training matters. A study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) found that compared with schools led by new principals who were not Academy graduates, elementary and middle schools led by recent Academy alumni made more significant gains in English-language arts and comparable gains in mathematics after three years, even though the Academy principals' schools were initially lower-performing than the others. So, if we do a better job preparing our principals, they will do a better job for us in leading student improvement.

Since principals in Cyprus have frequently lacked the ongoing professional support they need to develop their skills and meet the demands placed upon them, this research asserts that leadership development for equity and excellence needs to be made mandatory. This is because Cypriot school leaders have to face a daunting array of roles including enhancing the schools as a good place for learning by educators and students; providing opportunities for professional learning by staff; forming basic knowledge and skills to new approaches to curriculum and instruction, including tools for inquiring into student learning; and enhancing the collaborative dimension of the school. These new standards for learning and expectation of schools mean that leadership programmes must be redesigned to meet successfully a broad array of students with different needs. This suggests an obvious need for highly skilled school leaders who can create the conditions for improved student outcomes. Such a set of skills demands both the capacity to develop strong instruction and a sophisticated understanding of diverse organisational change. This study was designed to fill the gaps in knowledge about the content and design of the current leadership development programme in Cyprus. Given the lack of evidence of how best to develop leaders committed to equity, the study will seek to fill in some of these empirical gaps, in order to provide a more fine-grained portrait of how and under what conditions potential programmes in Cyprus could produce effective leaders.

## 1.6 Meaning of Equity and Excellence

For school leaders, leading for equity and excellence means working to ensure that all students are given the real possibility of a fair distribution of opportunities to learn or to participate. Equity in educational contexts is complex, multifaceted, encompassing differences in resources, quality of instruction and differences in outcomes (Alleksaht-Snyder and Hart, 2001). Because there are multiple factors that influence these outcomes, the present study focuses on the organisational level because leadership work is often used as a way to move towards equity in educational outcomes and processes. By equity, the study does not refer to equality, which focuses on strict quantitative measures (Secada, 1989). Instead, equity refers to some qualitative sense of fairness, much more open to debate. Deciding whether a situation is equitable or not is in part also a political question and one for which there may be little consensus.

Leading for equity and excellence for the purposes of this thesis has two meanings. First it means striving for *excellence* in quality teaching and learning as way of investing in continuing long-term national vitality. Working to raise achievement for all segments of the population is a key to keeping the world strong and vital. Schools must now educate all children, not simply the top fifth and educate them to meet far more challenging and academic standards. To achieve this, leaders need to concentrate on the goal of designing high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for all children.

Second, leadership towards *equity* involves mobilising and motivating people whose identities are rooted in one particular group to acknowledge differences, to form positive relations and achieve social harmony with those initially seen as different. In so doing, leadership can change in positive ways how members of different groups think and feel about each other and therefore how they treat each other. At best, by productive use of differences, effective leadership may achieve a positive impact on cross-cultural workforce competencies (Jayakumar, 2008). Jayakumar found that engaging in cross-racial interaction is related to lasting pluralistic orientation. When leaders promote productive use of differences,

students perceive that society, schools, teachers and leaders believe that their commitment to the school is worthwhile and thus are more likely to invest in themselves. I will argue that leaders have a collective responsibility to ensure that all students are dedicated to learning.

Both aspects of leadership towards equity and excellence are intimately connected so that one is impossible without a focus on the other. Leadership for equity and excellence is, therefore, a condition in which students are treated fairly, different groups are brought together, so that differences are unrelated to accomplishment and high-quality teaching and learning can be achieved.

## **1.7 Organisation of the Thesis**

The chapters of this thesis explore the interaction of two powerful research streams: leadership and diversity. The study posits that leaders working towards equity and excellence use their unique strengths to provide innovative new solutions to bring minority groups of people together and establish a safe ground for quality teaching and learning. In particular, minority groups come together when their differences are respected and not eliminated. Weakening or eliminating their differences and identities in order to improve relationships is neither necessary nor sufficient.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review on leadership, leadership development and diversity. Most of this research focuses on leadership in improving student outcomes, such as enhanced learning and greater social interactions among members of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In Chapter 3, research methods, data collection and data analysis are presented. In Chapter 4 I present a narrative analysis of the four case studies. The next two chapters, Chapters 5 and 6, include discussion of findings from cross-case analysis. Finally, Chapter 7 includes conclusion, limitations and suggestions for further research.

Leadership for equity and excellence is almost always a complex, long-term and

## Chapter One: Introduction to the Issues

challenging endeavour. For me, leadership for equity and excellence is needed both theoretically and practically. I hope that this thesis will provide an understanding of the processes and practices of leadership involved in developing equity and excellence. This, in turn, will help leaders address the pressures and challenges that diversity brings, viewing leadership as ‘a social process...[that]...depends on the relationships that are built both within the school, and also in the wider community’ (Crawford, 2009, p. 10). The thesis invites us to better imagine leaders who through their efforts have managed to build organisations in which different groups are neither in conflict with each other nor simply tolerating each other but instead are actively and happily engaged with each other for the common good. I begin with a close study of the relevant literature for leadership in developing equity and excellence.

## CHAPTER

## 2

# Literature Review

In a world where ‘only the privileged have the foundations and access to enable them to engage in productive participation in the economy’ (Moloi, Gravett and Petersen, 2009, p. 294), educational leadership represents a major effort to providing equity and excellence. The reality in Cyprus is one where the student population is diverse with diverse levels of expectation or education (Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh, 2004). The lives of minority students are structured by deep contradictions that can seriously compromise their future well-being. Newcomer immigrant minority students enter an education system shaped by school reform policies that fail to consider their particular needs or realities (Iordanidis, 2008, p. 155). Those who enter mid-way through their educational career, for example, are expected to master a new academic language – something that typically takes five to seven years under optimal circumstances (Thomas and Collier, 1997) – while also learning all of the explicit and implicit curriculum that their native-born peers have been exposed to over the course of their entire educational experience. Most of these students come from poor families and enter schools with a myriad of emotional and behavioural problems that make it more difficult for routine teaching and learning practices that take place (Panayiotopous and Nicolaidou, 2007). While some schools in disadvantaged contexts are able to ‘raise their game’, others simply are not able to do so because of powerful socio-economic forces that persist and ultimately prevail (Harris et al., 2006).

This chapter relates to the two research questions guiding the thesis. In particular, the thesis first examines the role of leadership in developing equity and excellence and how leaders address them, and second, it discusses how effective

leaders can be developed to lead such schools. The first section of this chapter commences with a distinction between good leadership and leadership for equity and excellence and explains why a focus on the former is no longer adequate. Definition of terms including 'leadership practice', diversity' and 'minority' is then given. Because leadership in diverse schools is associated with complexity, but also with responsibility and uncertainty, the next section looks at four key barriers that leadership has to overcome and respond to in order to reach equity and excellence. Next, I consider multicultural education and its efforts to overcome these problems. Specifically, I outline the various educational multicultural paradigms that have been developed over the years and then I describe the lessons drawn from this exploration. I then set forth four relevant concepts from leadership theory – trait charismatic, transformational, situational contingency and path-goal – and illustrate how they relate to the leadership for equity and excellence. Next, I describe the various propositions that have been made around the theme of diversity and leaders. In particular, I review the various tools and pathways that have been proposed to deal with diversity issues more effectively, including the importance of the relationship between leaders and the identity function of leadership. The last section provides an illustration of the leadership development literature.

### 2.1 Effective Leadership

Organisation theorists have identified various core functions that leaders fulfil in organisations. These include establishing incentives to encourage ongoing individual and group effort, commitment and alignment to the organisation's objectives, determining the organisation structure and recruiting, and developing individuals to perform the various roles in the organisation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Earley and Weindling, 2004; Fullan, 2009; Gardner, 1995; Heck and Hallinger, 1999). Although these core functions have long been recognised as 'what leaders need to do', what is less well understood is 'how leaders' can accomplish these objectives *effectively* given the numerous constraints they experience. These constraints may include demographic changes, technology



## Chapter Two: Literature Review

trends, geopolitical alternations and environmental issues. Given that the world is constantly changing, effective leadership that is ready to adapt to and leverage opportunities to excel from such trends is needed.

Research has also begun to provide clarity of what constitutes 'effective leadership'. In fact, research consistently confirms that the success of any innovation depends on the capacity of effective principals and teachers to carry it out (Bruner, 2008). As Harris (2009) states, 'one common denominator of all high performing schools is effective leadership' (p. 88). Literature also emphasises the powerful relationship between leadership and school improvement, highlighting that principals make a significant difference in school performance (Hopkins, 2001). In fact, research has demonstrated that the quality of leaders and the specific practices in which they engage are second only to teachers' influence in predicting student achievement (Day et al., 2009; Kythreotis, Pashiardis and Kyriakides, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004).

A stream of research has also started to uncover the elements of effective school leadership. The work initiated by Silins et al. (2000) has shown that leaders influence classroom outcomes directly through the selection, support and development of teachers. The study by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) identified the most critical practices of instructional leadership – with both direct and indirect effects – which are aimed at improving teaching and learning. The concept of principal as instructional leader stands in sharp contrast to traditional images of school administration, which emphasise the leader's role in maintaining discipline and bureaucratic order. Instructional leaders work systematically with teachers in a collegial fashion to build the knowledge and skill necessary for instructional improvements. However, much of what well-intentioned leaders do in the name of school improvement never actually reaches the instructional core. Research has long underscored the complex nature of instructional leadership in schools and the difficulty that single individuals such as principals have in fulfilling such expectations (Hallinger, 2003). The work of instructional leadership has become more complex and too much for a single

individual, both in terms of energy and expertise (Murphy, 2002). Accordingly, recent work on the principalship (Murphy, 2002) points to the principal as a leader of an instructional leadership cadre, rather than as a sole multipurpose, all-responsible instructional leader.

Another influential body of research on leadership effectiveness includes activities that indirectly influence practice by creating organisational conditions in the school that are conducive to positive change. Leithwood et al. (2004) wrote about the characteristics of effective leaders as managers of culture and climate. Research now pays more attention to the behaviours that school leaders can enact to positively influence teacher perspective. For instance scholars note leaders' abilities to appreciate the emotional states of teachers (Crawford, 2008). These abilities have been found necessary in that they enable teachers to 'discern those states in complex social circumstances, to respond in ways that are considered helpful and to understand and manage their own emotions' (Leithwood and Day, 2007, p. 11). The presence of a professional community also appears to foster collective learning of new practices – when there is principal leadership (Marks, Louis and Printy, 2000). Principals create conditions for rich dialogue about improvement (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008). Day (2007a) highlighted the close relationship between trust building and sustained development of the school.

There are a number of leadership practices that are part of the repertoire of successful leaders in most contexts. A review by Day et al. (2007) organised leadership practices into four main categories: 'setting directions', 'developing people', 'redesigning the organisation' and 'managing the teaching and learning' programme (p. 42 – 43). Findings such as these, building on longer-term lines of investigation into 'effective schools', school restructuring and school improvement (Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Teddlie and Stringfield, 2007), begin to establish what meeting the urban school leadership challenge may entail. But for me, there is still more work to be undertaken in understanding leadership in diverse contexts. I hope to argue that leaders could exercise these practices with

attention to the hearts and minds of other people who come from different cultures and have different assumptions or interests. However, the study of leadership for equity and excellence has not been given enough voice in the active conversation about the nature of effective leadership (Leader, 2008). As I said in Chapter One, this research is about details, about the experience of effective leadership in four diverse schools that showed some signs of improvement. Below I explain why research in the diverse schools of Cyprus is important with respect to enhancing knowledge and advancing understanding of a construct of leadership.

### **2.2 Exploring Leadership in Cyprus's Context**

After explaining the importance of leadership context, I give a detail account of the research carried out in diverse settings in Cyprus and elsewhere.

#### **2.2.1 Context Matters**

Understanding how leadership dynamics are embedded in diverse and complex contexts would usefully extend existing leadership theories. Over the last two decades scholars have made numerous calls for leadership researchers to take greater account of contextual factors in the formulation of their theories as well as in operational definitions of leadership (Avolio, 2007; Boal and Hooijberg, 2000; Shamir and Howell, 1999). As described by Osborn et al., (2002) a contextual theory of leadership is one that recognises that leadership is embedded and 'socially constructed in and from a context' (p. 798), and they put it well that 'leadership and its effectiveness, in large part, are dependent upon the context. Change the context and leadership changes' (p. 797).

In diverse schools leaders find themselves in a crucible of diverse and acute learning needs, often diminished resources, limited hope and expectations and a history of low performance (Theoharis, 2007). Day et al. (2009) note that leaders do not use different practices in every different context but rather it is the way that these leadership practices are enacted that changes. They state that 'effective

leaders apply strategies in ways that are sensitive to school and student background characteristics, to nationally defined needs and to their core educational ideals for maximising pupils' achievement across a range of academic, social and personal competencies' (p. 3). Similarly, a study by Leithwood and Strauss (2010) suggests that changes in school processes are accompanied by changes in how the four core leadership practices identified above are enacted. For instance, redesigning the organisation has been found to be central to the work of leaders working in complex environments.

Several studies have also pointed out that students' poverty, diversity and school sector significantly moderate the effects of school leadership on pupil achievement (Gordon and Louis, 2009; Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008). Hickman (2009) argues that context influences concepts and practices of leaders, even though leadership concepts and practices tend to be adaptable and effective in different settings. She argues that the same concepts or form of leadership may be used in different contexts but may affect very different groups and may bring about different outcomes (Hickman, 2009). Although it may be helpful to leaders to develop practices to suit each context, what we don't want to produce is different theories of leadership even for contexts as different as public sector organisations versus non-profit organisations. The list could get long and cumbersome. In addition, this literature seems to be pointing the researcher in different directions, which may result in studies being conducted under different conditions. But Day et al. (2008) point out that studying 'one-context-at-a-time' will tell us little about how variations in context are related to variations in leadership practices (p. 14).

I believe that more research is needed into how leaders take the special features of their contexts into account as they carry out their leadership work. Along these lines, Bass (2008) suggests that effective leaders dealing with stress and threats use transactional leadership to articulate goals and expectations and the pathways that need to be followed. He further states that transformational leadership can then augment performance by displaying care for follower welfare, inspiring

through leading from the front and by convincing followers they are part of a larger entity and mission, thus not isolated when confronted by threats. Since there are a wide variety of contexts in which the leaders have to operate, leaders require a wide repertoire and a better idea of which arrows to select under which circumstances. The studies reviewed above also show that leadership is not just passively influenced by contexts, but it can interact with the context and serve to intensify or attenuate challenging situations. Thus, leadership in diverse contexts demands an appreciation of how individuals both shape their context and are shaped by it.

These studies illustrate that it is complex to disentangle the relative effectiveness or proper mix of leadership in diverse contexts in order to provide sufficient structure as well as enable agentic behaviours that may be required to develop equity and excellence. Finding the right mix may be problematic. However, I do not believe that studying leadership in these contexts will necessarily change basic understandings of the essence of leadership. Further research may show that the manner and effectiveness with which such models operate will be contextualised and that the unique qualities and characteristics of diverse contexts will create contingencies that alter the relationships between constructs in these theories. How a leader's behaviour interacts with other elements in the organisational systems is a key focus of the research in this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Leadership in Schools in Challenging Circumstances**

The topic of leadership and diversity is gaining interest from scholars and practitioners around the world. Research consistently illustrates that school leaders play a critical role in developing a culture in the school which respects diversity (Morrison, Lumby and Sood, 2006; Walker, Dimmock and Stevenson, 2005). A study conducted by Harris (2009) points towards a model of leadership that is fundamentally concerned with building positive relationships and empowering others to lead. Day (2007b) found that principals in challenging contexts remain constantly concerned with building and sustaining their schools

as caring, values led, trustful collaborative communities rather than as quasi businesses' (p. 68). More recently Harris (2009) has identified six leadership practices for schools in challenging circumstances. The practices include building vision and values; distributing leadership; leading learning; investing in staff development; and maintaining positive relationships. Mulford et al., (2007) also provided additional insights into successful leadership in high-performing schools in high-poverty communities. They suggest that these principals spend less time out of their schools; spend more time working with students; place more importance on managing tensions and dilemmas; want to be seen to be fair; communicate results to staff; and provide safe, supportive environments.

The present research aims to expand on these theories and understand leadership practice by accessing the particular Cypriot setting. As 'the literature dealing explicitly with multicultural education and school leadership is not extensive, particularly in Cyprus' (Zembylas and Iasonos, 2010, p. 177), more work still needs to be done to better understand the role of leaders in diverse schools.

### **2.2.3 Leadership in International Settings**

A review of international literature reveals that leadership practices are informed by varied cultural beliefs and assumptive frameworks (Bush and Qiang, 2000; Dimmock and Walker, 2002; Hallinger and Kantamara, 2000; Hyatt and Simons, 1999). This research encourages researchers to move towards more nuanced concepts of cultures as complex, multi-layered and changing phenomena. Research has also focused on leadership practices that positively equalise and improve the opportunities and prospects for minority students. Given the palpable inequities within Hong Kong schools, Chiu and Walker (2007) explain how the Hong Kong school leadership culture creates formidable challenges for leaders seeking to advance equity and excellence. They stress that it is incumbent upon the principal and other school leaders to work tangibly to promote educational equity. They also note that these concrete actions become more meaningful when they are based on a clear set of authentic, just values shared

within the school community. In McMahon's (2007) study in Canada school leaders focused on democratic practices and equitable treatment of all members of the learning community. Democratic transformation in education has also been emphasised by another Canadian study. It has been noted that failing to question and restructure the curriculum, policies and practices of schools, programmes aimed at underachieving students create 'narrow definitions of achievement and accountability are reinforced that restrict the possibilities for teaching, learning and educational leadership' (Furman and Gruenewald, 2004, p. 53). Fua's (2007) research in Tongan school illustrates the linking of central Tongan cultural beliefs to requirements for successful leadership in that society. This work makes a strong contribution toward helping school leaders think more complexly about the challenges of leadership for equity in a postcolonial society.

These studies have made a substantial and important contribution toward incorporating international perspectives into an existing research discourse on educational leadership for equity and excellence. As Skrla et al., (2007) note 'international diversity has been a largely missing element from the set of social justice issues that have gained increasing prominence in the Western educational leadership discourse over the past 15 years' (p. 786). Additionally, Anglo-American perspectives have dominated established educational leadership discourse. Contemporary scholars have alerted researchers to the links between cultural values and leadership practice and warned of the dangers of continuing to operate from monocultural assumptions and frameworks (Begley, 1996; Heck and Hallinger, 1999; Leithwood and Steinbach, 1991). According to Collard (2007) these practices have:

frequently privileged mono-cultural, mainstream values which have meant indigenous and ethnic groups have suffered alienation, exclusion and disadvantage. Western educational interventions in developing nations also frequently fail to acknowledge the rich cultural traditions of recipient societies and theories and practice are rarely appropriately scrutinised for 'cultural fit'. (p. 740)

There is another problem when a country adopts an international perspective to multicultural education. For example, in Germany teachers and students prefer to deal with international topics such as indigenous people in America and thus tend to neglect the challenges of their own multicultural society (Luchtenberg, 2009). One reason for this tendency, Luchtenberg explains, could be that it is easier to reflect on distant problems than to tackle one's own situation and attitudes.

This research is an important step in the direction towards a more nuanced understanding of school leadership in Cyprus's context. Clearly there is much to learn from investigating leadership in international settings around the globe.

### **2.2.4 Leadership in Cyprus's Context**

In an increasingly uncertain and rapidly evolving global economy, leadership is affected by situational dynamics which includes not only the values of national cultures, but also the belief systems and paradigms of the world's varying religious traditions. Clearly there is still a need for theories to be developed that can increase our understanding of effective leadership in contexts that have received inadequate attention. Though there have been various studies exploring the challenges school leaders face across the country there is room for more research. Despite the fact that several studies have been conducted in other countries, each country has its unique cultural make-up. Incorporating considerations beyond the Western context in which leadership operates would build on theories of leadership-in-situ (Lumby et al., 2009). In addition, the schools in these countries can be considered as mature organisations where diversity is a well-established phenomenon. These schools thereby provide their own models for how to handle potential diversity challenges and conflicts. In contrast, Cyprus cannot rely on any 'ready-to-wear' model. As described above, context matters.



With context influencing constructions around leadership behaviours, the study of leadership in the Cypriot educational system becomes important. The policy and professional contexts in which leaders work have long been recognised as critical external impulses of successful leadership practices (Day, Sammons and Hopkins, 2008). While similar leadership practices have been found to work in different contexts (Day et al., 2009), the Cyprus context is unique as it is highly centralised and is likely to influence constructions around specific leadership behaviours that are appropriate or acceptable in that environment. Yet, Cyprus's policy context influences on the emergence of successful school leadership have not been the subject of significant inquiry (Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh, 2004; Pashiardis, 2004; Zembylas and Iasonos, 2010). As was described in the last chapter, Cypriot schools are considered as government institutions and not as community institutions. Pre-primary, primary and secondary education is under the authority of the MOEC, which is responsible for the educational policy making, the administration of education and the enforcement of educational laws (Kyriakides, 1999). Thus, principals and teachers are expected to implement innovations brought in by the MOEC, regarding them as part of the contract which they accepted when they became employed. Therefore, many teachers seem to agree uncritically and superficially with curriculum policy. These are matters with which this study is centrally concerned.

Shweder et al., (2002) note that liberal democratic nations do not come to terms with cultural differences in identical ways. Their legal and moral traditions, histories of benign and hostile contact across cultural, religious and racial groups, and mythical narratives of themselves affect the context in which individuals negotiate and confront differences and also affect the formal, institutional treatments of such conflicts. She further argues that the terms tolerance, diversity, and empathy take a different meaning in different democratic societies. This is because the increasingly wide range of diverse cultural groups hold contradictory beliefs about appropriate social and family life practices. Nations also differ considerably in their constitutional conceptions of the proper

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relationship between state and religion. In Cyprus there is no distinct separation between public schools and religious instruction. These differences can affect not only how the individual nations respond to emerging cultural differences, but also how members of minority groups position and advocate for themselves. As Geertz (2000) comments:

Positioning Muslims in France, Whites in South Africa, Arabs in Israel, or Koreans in Japan are not altogether the same sort of thing. But if political theory is going to be of any relevance at all in the splintered world, it will have to have something cogent to say about how, in the face of a drive towards a destructive integrity, such structures can be brought into being, how they can be sustained, and how they can be made to work (p. 257).

Apart from structures, which are likely to differ from one country to another, intergroup relations are also likely to differ. For instance, in Cyprus the treatment of Turkish-Cypriots is different from other groups. Historical factors deeply entwined with the history of the 1974 invasion have shaped the nature of bias toward different groups and the experiences of Greek-Cypriots towards Turkish-Cypriot groups. North states (1990):

History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society's institutions. (p. vii).

Thus, both theoretically and practically it is important to understand the broader dynamics of intergroup relations beyond these two groups. Learning about leadership in these contexts can contribute new insights to the theory and practice of leadership.

## 2.3 Definitions

I will take Ospina and Foldy's (2010) meaning of 'practice' as a 'social construct located within the collective rather than the individual realm. That is because practices are the outcome of collective meaning-making; they rest upon a shared knowledge that is largely implicit historically and culturally specific' (p. 4). Using this approach of practice to the study of leadership allows one to analyse the work of leadership as collective achievement, breaking it down into component parts (Ospina and Foldy, 2010). Practices are human interventions that make things in the world different from what they were before, altering the status quo (Polkinghorne, 2004). Such a frame of 'practice' becomes helpful 'in breaking down the indistinct processes of collective meaning-making among multiple and complex configurations of relationships into discrete elements that could be illustrated and compared (Ospina and Foldy, 2010, p. 4).

Identities become most vivid and salient when encountering others who are different. Some scholars contend that the most meaningful differences are those that reflect systematic and historical trends with regard to advantaged and disadvantaged social identity status (Prasad, Pringle and Konrad, 2006). For example, van Knippenberg, de Dreu and Homan (2004) specified that diversity refers to 'differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self' (p. 1008). From this perspective, women, ethnic minorities, non-heterosexual individuals, individuals with disabilities, and other stigmatised group members represent social identity groups that have been historically disadvantaged and thus should be the focus of discussions of diversity. In fact, Konrad (2006) argued that 'studies that assume away status and power differences between groups threaten to result in a misleading set of findings that could direct organisational efforts away from the problems and opportunities with the greatest impact on outcomes' (p. 3). Thus, one set of researchers retain a specified, rather narrow definition of diversity and members who make up diverse groups. On the other hand, additional scholars argue that diversity exists and is meaningful in a much broader sense.

I sympathise with Konrad's definition of diversity with regard to devalued social identities as they relate to social and interactive processes. This study focuses on diversity as represented by ethnicity, race, culture, nationality and socio-economic status. It also acknowledges practices based on gender, age, cohort, religion, sexual orientation and disability. Thus, the discussion addresses the cultural implications of these core, agreed-upon propositions about learning in terms of ethnicity, race and nationality, within the Cyprus context.

For the purposes of this research 'minority' primarily refers to students whose parents or grandparents emigrated from different countries through the most recent immigration flows to Cyprus (i.e. post-1990). The study acknowledges the fact that these demographic shifts are contesting the notion of 'minority', which have come to include various groups regardless of their culture, socio-historical experiences and communities in which they belong. It is true that not all minority groups have had similar experiences in terms of their history and schooling; therefore, definitions of minority status have to be more complex and nuanced. As a result, the present study recognises these notions, which have uniformly applied the concept of minority regardless to which racial and ethnic group they belong, and therefore acknowledges that much heterogeneity exists in immigrant minority students, by recognising that not all students in either category conform to the dominant narratives about their respective groups (Ngo and Lee, 2007; O'Connor, Lewis and Mueller, 2007). These terms are primarily used as heuristics and as markers of the differential social and educational experiences of minority students.

### **2.4 Examining the Forces for Change Towards a New Leadership Model**

The challenges associated with increased diversity and shifts in demographics have a number of implications for leadership towards equity and excellence. Because these factors pose important barriers to the work of leadership, this

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section outlines the four major building blocks of inadequate educational outcomes that leadership for equity and excellence is required to respond. The four key barriers include:

- Low quality teaching and dysfunctional learning environments
- Immigration consequences such as poverty and lack of social supports
- Lack of social capital
- The influence of culture on structures.

These will be looked at in more detail below. The identification of these factors as impediments to equity and excellence enabled me to gain better understanding of leadership experience. Studying the environment in which leadership for equity is enacted can enable one to get a more thorough understanding of the role of contextual factors pertaining to schools. For instance, DiTomaso and Hooijberg (1996) point out that:

the attitudes, values, beliefs, and hence, behaviours of individuals are socially constructed within a context of group and intergroup relations and that people act through social, political and economic institutions that create, embed, and reproduce the inequality among people which we then call diversity (pp. 164–165).

Thus, context represented by economic, political and social factors is an important dimension in understanding leadership.

One of the explanations for the factors influencing equity and excellence is that of globalisation. Globalisation structures the new migratory flows by increasingly coordinating markets, economies, social practices and cultural models. But it also shapes the well-being and future of children of immigrants (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2009). Immigrant youth arrive in new destinations with distinct social and cultural resources such as high aspirations for education and well-honed skills for developing relationship to help them

negotiate unfamiliar territories (Garcia-Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco and Todorova, 2008). These students are children of educated professional parents and received excellent schooling in their home countries. Others encounter a variety of challenges and struggle to gain their bearings in an educational system that too often puts them on the path of downward assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993). In this case, youth face difficult educational journeys as their parents include large numbers of poorly schooled, semi-skilled or unskilled workers, many of them without proper documentation (illegal immigrants).

Cyprus, although not a paradigmatic country of immigration in the past, now provides an important case study. Cyprus has undergone intensive demographic change in the past ten years, with the latest census conservatively estimating the number of 'non-Greek-Cypriot' nationals at 14% (NationMaster, 2010). While Cypriot schools have never been ethnically heterogeneous, the rapidity of change has given rise to a substantial alteration in the demographic make-up of many schools. Most of them struggle academically, leaving schools without acquiring the tools that enable them to function in the global competitive labour market (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). It is also not yet certain that minority children will be afforded equal educational opportunities. And the factors outlined below certainly feed psychological barriers that can sabotage success.

### **2.4.1 The Four Key Barriers**

In understanding leadership work, as well as recognising the variety of identities that are brought to schools, it is important to understand the elements that impede equity and excellence. Here I will identify some of the most important factors.

The first factor influencing high student achievement is that of quality teaching. Studies showed that teachers' academic background, preparation for teaching and certification status, as well as their experience, significantly affect their students' achievement (Boyd et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2000). In Clotfelter, Ladd

and Vigdor's (2007) study, teachers' qualifications rendered teachers more effective (i.e. better prepared to teach) and were also shown to have large effects on students' achievement. Thus, the achievement gap would be much reduced if low-income minority students were routinely assigned to such higher qualified teachers than those they most often encounter. Some studies also suggest that the negative effects of an ineffective teacher persist into future years, lowering children's academic achievement, and two or three such teachers in a row create a substantial deficit (Sanders and Rivers, 1996). The effects may combine with a dysfunctional learning environment where practice becomes routine and there is little need for professional expertise or teacher collaboration to develop the curriculum and solve problems of practice. However, teachers are less likely to exhibit such behaviours and promote their student's achievement if their perceptions, expectations and behaviours are not biased by racial stereotypes. Similarly, Lightfoot (1978) contends that

Teachers, like all of us, use the dimensions of class, race, sex, ethnicity to bring order to their perception of the classroom environment. Rather than the passage of time teachers' perceptions become increasingly stereotyped and children become hardened caricatures of an initially discriminatory vision (pp. 85–86).

The consequences of immigration for minority students are great and constitute the next factor that impedes equity and excellence. While some immigrants integrate with relative ease, one cannot overlook students' national origins, socio-economic status, family resources and the way they are received in the host country (Rumbaut, 1999). For children, immigration, therefore, can be a transformative process with profound implications, one in which they go through a constellation of changes that have a lasting impact on their development. For instance, immigrant children face the unique challenges of learning a new culture and negotiating different cultural contexts and expectations. Cultural practices are first learned in childhood as part of socially shared repertoires that make the flow of life predictable. The social flow changes dramatically following

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migration; without a sense of cultural competence, control and belonging, immigrants often feel disoriented. Since schools are significant sites of cultural socialisation for immigrant students, students typically come into contact with the new culture more intimately and intensely than their parents do. In schools, they meet teachers who are often members of the dominant culture, as well as children from other backgrounds. Students who immigrate as adolescents often experience a more difficult adaptation than younger immigrant students, given that the transitions of adolescence and young adulthood are combined with the challenges of migration (Spencer and Dornbusch, 1990).

The next factor is that of social capital. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1964) work is important here, as it provides a set of conceptual tools (capitals, habitus and field) that allows one to draw links between everyday practices on the ground, in families and schools, with broader processes of production and reproduction in the society at large. Central to the concept of capital is social capital, which can include economic, cultural and social resources available to a person by virtue of networks with which he or she is associated. What has been a major point of debate, however, is what resources give a person access to what. From the perspective of child development, the dominant argument has been that language use, child-rearing practices and social norms associated with the white middle class, along with access to institutions of privilege, represent social capital that provides upward mobility and enhances the likelihood of school success (Brooks-Gunn, G Duncan; Lareau, 2001). Social capital can include intergenerational wealth and knowledge that are values and provide access in particular contexts. Such knowledge can include norms for how to behave and communicate in particular settings, especially settings that are associated with privilege. Dika and Singh (2002) make useful distinctions between the theories of Bourdieu and Coleman. In their words 'Coleman's work supports the idea that it is the family's responsibility to adopt certain norms to advance children's life chances, whereas Bourdieu's work emphasises structural constraints and unequal access to institutional resources based on class, gender and race' (p. 34).



Coleman et al.'s (1966) study is assumed as one of the landmarks of social science research whose unexpected findings motivated a series of privately funded reports that amplified attention to several concerns. The study sought to measure the effectiveness of the better and more equitably funded schools which existed at the time. The weak or non-existent associations between resource funding and student achievement were seen as a blow to the hopes and assumptions of the proponents of greater and more equitable school funding programmes. Although the study has been criticised on strategies of both research and schooling, the study has strongly provoked researchers, practitioners and policy makers to search for differences in schools or teaching that did make a difference in student outcomes independent of students' class and family backgrounds.

Various statistical and descriptive studies set out to find those variations in schools and principal and teacher practices that explain and are most closely associated with student achievement. Such studies, usually called 'passive' studies (Cohen, Raudenbush and Ball, 2003 p. 135), attempted to find schools that were statistical outliers where their students averaged much higher performance than would be expected given the average socio-economic background of their students, and then to ask what it was that differentiated such schools from less successful schools. In one such study, Childress (2009) claimed that such schools existed and that they shared a set of predictable characteristics: strong leadership; clear and high expectations that all students could and would succeed; explicit attention to student performance and timely intervention when problems were identified; respectful attention to the surrounding community and students' families; a safe and orderly setting; and so on. A report on ethnicity and education from DES found strong focus on leadership as one of the key factors necessary to narrow achievement gaps for minority ethnic pupils (DES, 2005). Similar findings were offered by Siddle-Walker (2000), who points to the caring behaviours of teachers and principals, the support of parents, the forms of institutional support for students, and the high expectations placed upon students by the school community.

These findings underlie the idea that educators can reduce the correlations between student achievement and family background and improve student achievement overall. Research evidence shows that despite the dominant conceptions of risk based on deficit assumptions about innate ability and later on restrictive conceptions of social capital that supports academic learning, schools can resist these views and thrive even in the most difficult circumstances (Childress, 2009).

The next factor is that of culture and its intersection with the factors described above. Although structures are important in explaining academic achievement amongst minority students, cultural influences cannot be put aside. The importance of culture for the purposes of this study and educational leadership more general is definitely understated (Morrison, Lumby and Sood, 2006). Culture inheres in practices and meanings shared by members of a particular social group, such as families, ethnic networks, neighbourhoods, communities, schools and organisations. As Ward Goodenough described decades ago:

Culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members...It is rather an organisation of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving relating, and otherwise interpreting them (as cited in Keesing, (1974, p. 77).

Thus, in understanding leadership for equity, both structural and cultural factors and their intersections are necessary. Minority students' ethnic differences can no longer be seen in isolation but rather constructed out of various social processes. Unpacking the dimensions of culture in the study of leadership is therefore essential.

Given the oversights of the dominant theories of culture and leadership, Warikoo and Carter's (2009) review of literature of cultural explanations for racial

stratification help to nuance these theories. They argue that racial and ethnic identities emerge from the 'intersections of macro structural, institutional (schooling), and individual-level forces' (p. 373). They emphasise that these forces are neither 'static nor one-dimensional and their meaning, as expressed in schools, vary across time, space, and region (p. 373)'. Schools can either overtly or covertly reproduce racial meanings and inequality in their day-to-day activities by mapping particular racial identities (i.e. whiteness and Asian identity) into knowledge and intelligence (Lewis, 2003). Thus, some minority students may come to view the advanced classes as the ones for Asian and white students, or the 'smart kids' (Tyson, Darity and Castellino, 2005). This may in turn lead to unintended consequences for minority student behaviours. It seems that school structures support different cultural identity models and reinforce social boundaries that influence the ethno-racial differences in achievement outcomes. Understood like this, culture is a dynamic and practical process rather than a static concept. Multicultural education is one of the most powerful waves that came to deal with diversity challenges. The next section examines how the principles of multicultural education can be applied in overcoming these struggles and developing leadership focused on equity and excellence.

### **2.5 Multicultural Education**

This section describes some of the main response paradigms that have been developed in various countries to address the increasing number of minority students in schools. Attention to these paradigms is essential as the way in which leaders respond to these paradigms influences how students experience schools. These paradigms are likely to exist in some form in a nation that has experienced increasing immigration flows. Before identifying the various multicultural education responses that have been developed in various countries to address the increasing number of minority students in schools, I will give a brief description of multicultural education. Because practice in multicultural education in the context of Cyprus is new, I will describe its early development and its effects in the UK context.

### **2.5.1 The Characteristics of Multicultural Education**

The early phases of multicultural education emerged in the mid-1960s as a response to the struggle of the African-American civil rights movement in the United States. They developed subsequently in other nations, such as the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Banks (2009) describes multicultural education as:

an approach to school reform designed to actualise educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social class, and linguistic groups. It also promotes democracy and social justice. The goal of multicultural education is to reform schools, colleges, and universities so that students from diverse groups will have equal opportunities to learn (p. 13).

During this period education was initially regarded as means to achieve assimilation. The multicultural education encouraged racial, ethnic and social classes to assimilate into a 'common culture' as a way to 'prevent the formation of prejudices and misconceptions, tensions, and hostilities' (Taba, Brady and Robinson, 1952). While a majority of teachers were well-meaning and liberal, they lacked knowledge of minority children and their backgrounds and had lower expectations of children from immigrant backgrounds and from the manual working classes (Coard, 1971).

In most nations around the world multicultural education also continued to reflect and reproduce the racial and class stratification within society (Gillborn, 2008). The inequality that exists within society is reflected in the curriculum, textbooks, teacher attitudes and expectations. For instance, Parekh (2006) questions the 'Eurocentric curriculum' and argues that Eurocentric ideologies have two aims. First, European civilisation represents the highest form of life achieved by humankind so far and provides the standards by which to judge all others. Second, European civilisation attained its glory unaided by, and owes little if anything to, non-European civilisations. Its formative influences are all

European. These include the intellectual and political foundations which were laid by classical Athens and Rome, its moral and religious foundations which although non-European were radically reshaped in the light of the Greco-Roman heritage, and finally the rise of individualism, secularism, science, technology and so on, all assumed to be unique achievements of modern Europe and based on its modern heritage. The cultivation of these capacities, attitudes, values and sentiments that currently underpin and are cherished by European civilisation becomes the aim of education under the Eurocentric model. The content of education and the general ethos pervading the educational system highlight the glory and uniqueness of European civilisation and underplay or ignore the achievements and contributions of others.

The limits of Eurocentric education are obvious. Parekh (2006) points out that Eurocentric education stunts the growth of the critical faculty. Students taught to look at the world from the narrow perspectives of their own cultures are bound to reject all that cannot be accommodated within its categories. In addition, such education can breed arrogance, insensitivity and racism. Imprisoned within the framework of his or her own culture, the student cannot accept the diversity of values, beliefs, ways of life and views of the world as an integral part of the human condition. Instead, multicultural education should help students understand the history, social structure, culture, languages, and so on of their cultural and political communities in order to place themselves and find their way around these communities. Thus, the main task of education under this paradigm was to initiate pupils into the mainstream culture, to cultivate a strong sense of national identity and create a cohesive nation. Such education, however, marginalises students and takes a demeaning view of them. In general it sees education in political and instrumental terms, takes homogeneous views of the relevant communities and advocates monocultural education.

While various efforts and practices had been made over the years to eliminate ethnocentricity in the school curriculum and transform it into a multicultural one, consciousness raising amongst educators eventually took precedence (Coard,

1971). Terms such as multicultural education and antiracism started to gain popularity in teacher preparation programmes. However, in the mid-1980s the golden age of multiculturalism came to an end. Neo-conservative political forces attacked multicultural policies and progressively a neo-liberal discourse pervaded economic and social policies, also affecting national education systems. As a result, multicultural education has been removed from public national education systems.

### **2.5.2 The Example of the UK**

In the UK, the 1988 Education Reform Act impeded the equitable incorporation of minority children into the education system. A study by Modood et al. (1997), demonstrated that while some minority students were achieving well in schools and entering higher education, notably students of Indian and Chinese origin, many others, especially with origin in the Caribbean, Pakistan and Bangladesh, were negatively affected by the introduction of parental choice of school and the creation of a 'diversity' of schools designed to promote competition (p. 53). The development of citizenship has gained momentum after the New Labour government was elected in 1997 in order to produce students 'capable of positive participation in our ethnically diverse society' (QCA/DfEE, 1999, p. 2). Citizenship proposals were revised in 2001 and the Home Office introduced community cohesion based on shared values. In this neo-liberal vision of education, educating a child to be a good citizen focuses on the attainment of the 'complex skills' necessary for individual success in the global economy (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399)

Tomlinson (2009) notes that:

while in Britain there has always been antagonistic debate about a shared national identity and cultural heritage, by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century political hostility to multiculturalism, immigration, and diversity, combined with old-style post-imperial racism, had made the task of educating for a multicultural society very difficult (p. 257).

Educational experience requires a conception of multicultural education that goes further than respecting and tolerating the rights and needs of ethnic minorities but encompasses and explores all aspects of the multicultural dimension. Therefore, multicultural education needs not only to consider the pleasure of diversity but also more fundamental issues such as conflict and pain. If students are to transcend their own cultural experience in order to understand the differences of others, they need to go through a process of reflection and critique of their cultures and those of others.

### **2.5.3 Multicultural Education Paradigms**

Over the years various multicultural education paradigms have been developed. When a particular multicultural education paradigm emerges, its leaders and advocates will try to make it the most popular in academic, government and school settings. Banks (2009) notes that:

proponents of paradigms that can attract the most government and private support are likely to become the prevailing voices for multicultural education within a particular time or period' (p. 20).

Therefore, these paradigms might develop within a nation at different times. Below are some of the paradigms that have evolved in recent years.

#### **2.5.3.1 Ethnic Content**

One of the early responses that schools took to handle multicultural diversity was the integration of ethnic content into the curriculum. Ethnic content integration includes teaching about ethnic heroes, celebration of ethnic holidays, and the inclusion of ethnic feasts and festivals. It was assumed that the integration of such special units in the school curriculum would enhance the self-concepts and academic achievements of students of ethnic groups. Unfortunately, these practices resulted more in supporting stereotypes and sustaining inequities than demolishing them (Gorski, 2009).

### **2.5.3.2 Cultural Deprivation**

Cultural deprivation theories assume that minority students' underachievement is a result of their family disorganisation, poverty, and the presence of intellectual and cultural deficits. For these reasons, it is often thought that the provision of cultural and other experiences will compensate for these deficits. Such programmes have evoked strong criticisms for their ignorance about the cultures that students' bring to school (Carby, 1982). A review undertaken by Arzubagi, Noguron and Sullivan (2009) found that 60% of most of the articles described minority families along deficit lines. The arguments focused on what was described as a lack of social and cultural capital. For example, lack of understanding of the school system was repeatedly noted as an obstacle for minority families (McLaughlin et al., 2002; Schaller, Rocha and Barshinger, 2007; Sohn and Wang, 2006). The importance of socio-economic status in providing access to cultural, social and financial capital was also noted (Noguera, 2004). Social, economic and educational 'instability' of parents was positioned as creating a host of difficulties, including isolation, stress and environmental disadvantages (Lareau, 1987). These descriptors go hand in hand with deficit conceptualisations of the minority family because they remind one of the culture of poverty arguments (Arzubagi, Noguron and Sullivan, 2009). The culture of poverty argument is that some families lack the resources – material and human – to support its members' social advancement due to the value systems developed in response to their financial circumstances. In culture of poverty arguments, deficit views are often reserved for families with heads of household with low incomes, low formal educational attainment and working in unskilled or menial service jobs.

### **2.5.3.3 Structural**

The structural paradigm assumes that racism and discrimination are pervasive in schools and thus the school plays a significant role in keeping ethnic groups marginalised. The role of antidiscrimination in improving the educational opportunities of minority students remains a serious question. Often educators become preoccupied with the goals of multicultural education and assume that



those goals automatically take care of racism (Nieto, 2009). Moreover, teachers use race to predict future academic achievement of students (Ferguson, 2008). What is even more disturbing, Nieto argues, is the fact that racism is seldom mentioned in school and, therefore, is not dealt with. Many leaders think that introducing Human Relations Week will make students non-racist or non-discriminatory in general. Bringing racism into dialogues and conversations must therefore become the mission of the school. Giroux (1997) suggests that bringing race and racism out of the closet becomes a useful and positive pedagogical tool to help students locate themselves and their responsibilities concerning racism. If teachers fail to break the uneasiness of talking about race in the classroom, individual behaviours, institutional policies and practices in schools will remain unchanged.

### **2.5.3.4 Cultural Differences and Language**

The cultural difference and language paradigms reject the idea that low income and ethnic minority students have cultural or intellectual deficits (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Instead, they contend that minority students do achieve less in schools because their cultures and languages differ in significant ways from the school culture. Twenty five per cent of studies being reviewed referred to students' language differences as deficits, and another 25% focused on the implications of these deficits for their academic trajectories (Arzubiaga, Noguron and Sullivan, 2009).

The issue of limited English proficiency was also seen as problematic (McLaughlin et al., 2002). For instance, language proficiency in English, or lack thereof, was described as a barrier for Asian and Latino immigrant parents alike. In particular, Korean mothers were described as seeking indirect means of contact and showing reluctance to become involved in schools because of their hesitancy to speak directly to educators (Sohn and Wang, 2006). In addition, these authors highlighted how cultural differences had an impact on relationships between teachers and parents. Korean mothers did not perceive themselves as equal partners and were hesitant to express disagreement with teachers. Other

studies noted that language differences prevented parents from helping with schoolwork, and limited their possibilities of helping their children with school tasks in general (Aspiazu, Bauer and Spillet, 1998).

### **2.5.3.5 Cultural Ecology**

Ogbu (2003) asserts that the extent to which members of certain minority groups fail in mainstream schools can be linked to the different ways these groups enter society and approach schooling. In his thesis, minorities who migrated freely to the United States are 'voluntary' as opposed to 'involuntary' minorities. Voluntary minorities have not endured as much oppression in the United States as blacks descended from American slaves. In addition, voluntary minorities are less resentful of their status because their standard of comparison is usually their country of origin. The resentment and marginality that involuntary minorities feel is the basis for resistance or incomplete acceptance of school norms and goals, which helps to explain black underachievement. In particular, he contends that black people born and raised in the United States compare their condition with that of the white majority and feel a sense of resentment and pessimism that helps to foster a reactive, oppositional culture.

### **2.5.3.6 Stereotypes**

The stereotypes paradigm emphasises the importance of stigmas, stereotypes and marginality. Fordham (1996) writes about the sense that black people feel of being the stigmatised, subdominant minority group opposite the dominant 'Other' in the form of mainstream, white society. In their attempt to cultivate a sense of identity that is explicitly distinct from this Other and to signal that identity through an identifiably black persona, they choose either to detract from school performance or support it. An influential set of ideas about how they might detract concerns stereotypes and disidentification. Carter (1993) notes that minority youth are motivated to defy the stereotype or they have a 'burning drive to prove the racists wrong' (p. 76). Steele and Aronson (1998) use an experimental approach to stress that 'stereotype threat' can induce 'stereotype anxiety'. In the context of race, the anxiety is a nervous anticipation induced by

the threat that one's performance might confirm a negative racial generalisation. Such anxiety can depress performance even among confident as well as competent individuals in domains such as mathematics or 'languages' (Steele, 2004).

#### **2.5.4 The Study's Stance on Multicultural Education**

The basic lesson to be drawn from this exploration of multicultural education paradigms is that there are many challenges that remain to be resolved (Parekh, 2006). As Mosher and Smith (2009) point out:

.... education is a multifaceted process. There are most likely many factors, at many levels, that are necessary for success for all students but none that are sufficient alone (p. 44).

It seems that adequate solutions require bundling interventions focused on many factors and many levels of the system. Equitable education for minority students requires the proper mixture of myriad factors. If society fails to create equity, one that is aimed at raising achievement levels for all racial and ethnic groups, then nations' economic prosperity and domestic tranquillity could decline over the next half century as nations become more diverse.

Apart from considering the various factors I argue that school leaders may need to take into consideration the majority group members' perspectives. Majority and minority group members have different preferences for the ultimate outcomes of multicultural education. Majority group members tend to favour assimilation of minority groups into one single culture or the dominant culture (Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy, 2009). Based on these findings minority groups may have different preferences. For example, they may want to retain their cultural identity but typically in positive connection with other groups in the larger culture. Whereas majority groups favour assimilation of minority groups into their culture, minority groups may favour a more integrated approach. These

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assumptions are in stark contrast with Banks (2008) suggestions, which point out that 'when the student incorporates elements of the teacher's culture and the teacher incorporates elements of the student's culture, the school becomes synthesised' (p. 28). More specifically, Banks argues that when essential aspects of cultural differences are in some degree modified while maintaining their essence – a process which he calls acculturation – multicultural education is achieved.

Although Banks rightly suggests that assimilation and acculturation are different in important ways, he ignores the fact that assimilation and acculturation mean different things for different groups. Although modification of cultural differences is always desirable if students are to achieve in school, Banks (2009) celebrates assimilation when what minority students' ask for is multicultural integration with high common ingroup identity. Assimilation in fact is based on the assumption that minorities would go through an irreversible generational process, albeit at different speeds and in varying stages, by which their differences would be diminished and their paths would ultimately converge toward an allegedly uniform mainstream way of living.

While bringing all different kinds of cultures together under the school culture umbrella or increasing the sense of 'we-ness' as Banks (2009) suggests is desirable, yet people continue to think more deeply about and feel closer to and more positively about members of their own groups than members of other groups. Thus understanding the consequences of 'we' or the different responses people have towards assimilation and accommodation can create a society that is truly fair in structure and practice. The complexity of 'we' has influenced the present study in exploring even further the motivations of majority group members and their desires to preserve a system that advantages them as well as the motivations of minority group members to enhance their status.

## **2.6 Relevant Concepts from Leadership Theory**

Several approaches characterise the literature on leadership. While some emphasise the characteristics residing in leaders – for example, leadership traits, skills or styles – other approaches examine the contexts of leadership: for example, situations in which leadership is exercised, and rewards and punishments of leadership. Still others emphasised the interpersonal process between leaders and who they lead: for example, power relationships between leader and follower, and leader as servant of his or her follower (i.e. servant leader). In this section, trait, charismatic, transformational, situational, contingency and path-goal theories will be described. The intention of this section is to bring together the many concepts and practices of leadership developed over the years and illustrate how they relate to leading equity and excellence in diverse contexts.

### **2.6.1 Trait Theory**

Early years of leadership thought studied leadership in terms of traits, or fixed personal characteristics and innate qualities, found in great leaders. These ‘Great Man’ theories linked qualities such as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability to leadership effectiveness (Bass, 2008). Trait-based leadership theories give the false impression that leaders can share many of the same traits and yet behave in different ways and produce starkly different outcomes. They also ignore the characteristics of followers and the situation, which can also determine leadership effectiveness (Hosking, 2007). Although traits and personality are not considered as part of this study, research indicates that positive, active and developmental leader traits support social influence process for most effective leaders (Sosik and Jung, 2010) .

### **2.6.2 Charismatic Leadership**

Scholars who study charismatic leadership as a distinct theory for leadership, attribute it to individuals who, by the power of their person, have profound and extraordinary effects on their followers (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; House,

1977; Weber, 1947). In contrast to Weber (1947) who defined charismatic leadership as a 'divine gift', Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggest that charisma is an attributional phenomenon, where followers observe certain behaviours of a leader and associate such behaviours with prototypical attributes of leadership, namely self-sacrifices and personal risks incurring high costs to achieve the vision; trust generated by concern for followers over self interest; self-confidence; and high self-efficacy. In leading diverse contexts such emotional connection and social comfort between leader and followers could serve as a key to leadership effectiveness, given the sensitivity of diversity issues.

### **2.6.3 Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) first coined the phrase 'transformational leadership' when he compared this phenomenon to transactional leadership. Transactional leadership 'occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things' (p. 19). Burns contended that this form of leadership will not bind leaders and followers together in the long-term pursuit of a higher purpose, specifically, because there is no strong commitment to a moral purpose. In contrast, transformational leadership was seen as:

raising followers to a greater awareness about the issues of consequence requiring vision self-confidence and inner strength to argue for what is right and good, not for what is popular or acceptable according to established wisdom of the time (Bass, 1990, p. 319).

Transformational leaders are perceived to centre on personal values and beliefs where a leader operates out of a deeply held personal value system that includes justice and integrity (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership behaviour has been described mainly around four characteristics: idealised influence (charisma), inspirational motivation (vision and purpose), individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. The four characteristics are perceived to interact jointly to influence followers (Bass and Avolio, 1990).

To lead equity and excellence schools require transformational leadership that promotes positive and meaningful changes in people, teams and organisations. Although schools require a transformational leader who leads with a vision and confidence, to lead equity and excellence leaders need to exceed these goals and, instead, perform beyond expectations. Moreover, to lead equity and excellence leaders must constantly question the status quo, including understanding of facts and assumptions underlying concepts and situations. In recent years, leadership for equity has focused on transformational educational leadership more than any other model (Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy, 2005; Theoharis, 2007). Cooper (2009) argues that transformational leadership for equity and excellence involves one's engaging in self-reflection, systematically analysing schools, and then confronting inequities regarding race, class, gender, language, ability and/or sexual orientation . Upon doing so, one works towards the social transformation of schooling. Over the past several years, scholarship has grown regarding transformative leadership for equity, largely informed by various strands of critical theory. Although scholars generally agree that this form of transformative leadership requires self-awareness, ideological clarity and meaning-making (Evans, 2007b; Marshall and Oliva, 2006; Theoharis, 2007), they do not explain how consciousness develops adequate complexity to deal with the complexities that pertain to schools.

### **2.6.4 Situational Theory**

A situational definition of leader can be seen as a social process that defines reality in ways that make sense to lead, involving a dependency relationship in which individuals surrender their powers to interpret and define reality of others. In essence, the situation creates leadership. Situational leadership theories have received little empirical support from rigorous scientific research. In particular research suffers from conceptual and measurement ambiguity, lacks a solid theoretical framework to explain the effects proposed by the theory, and fails to account for demographic differences in leaders and followers that may influence its predictions across situations (Northhouse, 2007; Yukl, 2006). While attention

needs to be paid to employing leadership for equity and excellence across many situations and cultures, some situations may require more task-focused behaviours while others less developmental behaviours. Leaders therefore need to understand their own ways of interpreting and responding to events around them before they can challenge others' deficit thinking and oppose inequitable educational practices that are widely implemented and underscrutinised.

### **2.6.5 Contingency Theory**

Another popular situational approach to understanding leadership is contingency theory developed by Fiedler (1967). A leader's impact on group performance depends on a combination of leader orientation and a set of situational contingency factors; namely, leader-member relations, task-structure clarification and leaders' position power. One drawback of contingency theory is that it assumes that leaders are fixed in terms of their predisposition for a certain style of leadership. To lead equity and excellence, however, one must assess the situation to determine whether he or she is using the right mix of active or passive leadership behaviours.

### **2.6.6 Path-Goal Theory**

One of a leader's main functions is to pave the way for followers by clearing a path for them to achieve organisational goals (Yukl, 2006). The theory identifies four leader behaviours for various situations: directive (leader tells followers what to do), supportive (leader attends to need of followers), participative (leader invites followers to share in the decision-making process), or achievement oriented (leader sets high performance expectations and challenges followers to meet them). As the theory demonstrates, leaders using this theory structure the transaction they enter with followers and this is what most effective leaders working towards leadership and equity should do.

Undoubtedly these categorisations are overly simplistic, with substantial areas of overlap (particularly between the latter three), yet they highlight the significant challenges of defining leadership and, consequently, of highlighting diversity.



Although these theories have helped to deepen the understanding leadership phenomenon, these theories have focused on leadership in a variety of contexts and not in diverse contexts explicitly. Despite their importance in informing leadership research, the next section presents how leaders have dealt with issues of equity and excellence in diverse, complex contexts.

## **2.7 Leading for Equity and Excellence**

This section reviews literature addressing the themes of diversity and leadership. The review for this section yielded sources that answered research question one: How do leaders develop equity and excellence in diversity in schools? Findings include work from leadership, education, management and some from cultural studies where appropriate. I start by emphasising the need for more leadership research in diverse contexts, and I then highlight the need to think about leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers. A description follows of the various tools that scholars proposed in dealing with diversity challenges and opportunities of leadership for equity and excellence.

### **2.7.1 Developing a More Nuanced Understanding of Leadership in Diverse Contexts**

Much of contemporary research in leadership studies on diversity and leadership has been conducted in the context of organisations (companies) situated in different national cultures (Goldsmith, Robertson and Hu-Chan, 2003; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). Information from these studies provides insights into organisational leadership in different cultures. Hofstede's (2001) study of different national cultures collected data from 116,000 respondents working in subsidiaries of one multinational company in more than 50 countries. He identified five main dimensions in which country culture vary: power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualism versus collectivism; masculinity versus femininity; and long-term versus short-term orientation. He emphasised that culture is extremely stable over time and change comes primarily from the outside 'in the form of forces of nature or forces of human

beings; trade, conquest, economical or political dominances, and technological breakthroughs' (p. 34). However, even this research does not specifically address situations where actors from various cultures and contexts come together to work on interconnected problems. These studies focus on how culture, and in some cases subculture, affects organisational leadership in different countries.

A more recent and most ambitious study to date on leadership and culture is the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study conducted by House et al. (2004) who surveyed 17,000 managers in more than 950 organisations in 62 countries. Building on the work of Hofstede and others, they developed nine dimensions on which cultures differ. Like Hofstede's study, it is difficult to know based on the GLOBE study how practices and values interact in situations where participants from these cultures come together in a joint endeavour. Despite a number of limitations of his IBM study (Schwartz, 1990; Voronov and singer, 2002), Hofstede's theoretical framework has remained popular. Current studies of culture and leadership make it clear that relationships among culture, societal, organisational and leadership effectiveness must be understood, acknowledged and included in leadership processes to resolve problems or generate new methods and outcomes (House et al., 2004).

While these studies constitute a substantial evidence basis for understanding leadership and culture, however, they may inadvertently reinforce a rather functionalist approach that underestimates individual and contextual differences and imposes western frameworks of analysis (Graen, 2006; Scandura and Dorfman, 2004). The dimensionalisation of national culture is not the only or necessarily the most productive approach to understanding cultural differences. As Tayeb (2001) argues, 'by putting culture into neat, sometimes unconnected, little boxes we are in danger of losing sight of the big picture' (p. 93). Moreover, by reducing the study of leadership across cultures to comparison of cultural value indices we run a very real risk of oversimplifying cultural variations and neglecting other significant factors such as the influence of history, geography, demographics, religion and individual differences. Instead, more attention could

be given to illuminating the rich fabric of influences that shape leadership experiences in an endeavour to enhance understanding rather than explanation and/or prescription.

Although more conceptual development is needed, business research has shown why diversity is the spice of the global information age and why organisations are ahead in experiencing diversity and sometimes turning it into a business advantage. On the other hand the educational leadership literature has not yet fully explored actions and practices that best schools are taking to try to deal with diversity (Lumby and Coleman, 2007). Only relatively recently, educational leadership has recognised the need to pay attention to the diverse needs of the school population (Wilkinson, 2008). Despite the flourishing inquiry based on leadership and diversity issues, however, there is still a 'paucity in forward looking critical theory and practice to develop...engagement' (Morrison, Lumby and Sood, 2006, p. 277). One reason for this state of affairs, one could argue, is the consistent focus on leadership paradigms that are framed by whiteness, ethnocentrism and class (Wilkinson, 2007).

School leaders can reduce the effects of diversity and difference in schools (Leithwood and Steinbach, 2002; Mulford et al., 2007). Although research showed that all successful principals tend to exhibit similar leadership practices, these practices do not take into account contextual sensitivity (Day et al., 2009). Despite the relatively few studies which considered contexts in identifying successful practices (Brown, 2004; Day et al., 2009; Harris, 2009; Riehl, 2000), the story about leading difference is not over. Additional theories, narratives and empirical studies are needed that relate to leadership for equity and excellence. This study hopes to add to them. As Gray (2001) notes:

we don't really know how much more difficult it is for schools serving disadvantaged communities to improve because much of the improvement research has ignored this dimension – that it is more difficult, however, seems unquestionable. (p. 33)

What we know, however, is that it is difficult to think of leadership as the product of a single individual providing direction.

### **2.7.2 Review of the Tools and Pathways**

Successful leadership in diverse schools has highlighted several factors in addressing diversity challenges. For example, research highlighted the importance of values and vision of leaders in the process of school improvement (Harris and Chapman, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2007). Walker and Quong (2000) posit that 'differences, be they individual, group, ethnic or social, present potential for learning, creative and innovation in schools (p. 70). However, this research does not explore in what ways leadership allows differences to surface. Leading for equity emphasises differences by letting people wear their social identities, and feel acknowledged and respected. Thus, having strong values or even inviting others to share and develop those visions is not enough. Values which are not linked to a strong, articulated strategy — linked to equity and excellence goals — do not bring success. Another study by Walker, Dimmock and Stevenson (2005) demonstrated that the link between schools' statement of values and the content of the school improvement plan was so explicit that concepts of fairness, justice, respect and equal treatment were keenly felt by students.

Wilkinson (2008) posits that 'attempts to transform current leadership practices on the grounds of equity are deeply threatening to the status quo and may frequently be met with passive resistance or outright hostility' (p. 111). Thus, power and politics in studies of diversity and educational leadership cannot be ignored. If racism is the opposite of multicultural education, what does tolerance stand for or where does it lie? Tolerance of minority 'otherness' of students underpins the constructions of diversity in several articles Billot, Goddard and Cranston (2007) for example, the use of words such as 'celebrate', 'manage' and 'tolerate' in several studies positions principals as agentic subjects who possess

the formal authority to tolerate or acknowledge minority students. In a different vein, Vedoy and Moller (2007) note that power inequities arise when principals emphasise understanding and caring of students' home cultures as the means of comprehending the student population. Such an approach disarms those who might want to disagree openly and feel respected. Educators who consciously exclude a colour-blind approach typically do not understand how white privilege operates in schools; thus, they fail to recognise and stop discriminatory practices (Evans, 2007a; Shields, 2000; Shields and Sayani, 2005). The highly political and contested nature of diversity and educational leadership provides a ground for further research.

Some recent work has focused on leaders who strive to create caring spaces for all constituents in the school organisation (Lopez, Gonzalez and Fierro, 2006; Nieto, 2009; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2000), while there is evidence to suggest that teachers expect less of their minority students, push their students less and sometimes convey, even unwittingly, a deep disdain and disrespect for their families by suggesting that home cultural values have no place in school (Nieto, 2009). Conceptualisations of multicultural education earlier in this chapter revealed that multicultural education is not a unitary concept. Kalantzis and Cope (1989) note that for multicultural education to be effective it needs to consider not just the pleasure of diversity but more fundamental issues that arise as different groups negotiate, the community, and the basic issues of material life in the same space – a process that equally might generate conflict and pain.

In trying to solve these issues, research has focused on ethno-empathy – the ability of a person or a group to experience what the other ethnic group feels and thinks – has been introduced to deal with different groups' interactions in diverse contexts. According to Eisenberg (2000), empathy is an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition and is similar to what the other is feeling or could be expected to feel. Hoffman (2000) suggests that empathy involves two interacting components: (a) cognitive empathy entails cognitive awareness of another person's thoughts,

feelings, perceptions and intentions; and (b) affective empathy is the vicarious affective response to another person, meaning the ability to vicariously experience what the other feels.

In contrast to those who raised empathy dimensions in leading diverse organisations, Anderson (2009) notes that effective leaders are those 'who can hold on to the idea that social justice for low-income students is much more than a question of raising test scores or even increasing authentic academic achievement' (p. 177). To do this, leaders are required to work at both the individual and the collective level. As Anderson notes

oppressed groups only find success through collective action. It is in fact this legacy of the collective achievement of civil rights that makes many [leaders for equity and excellence] instinctively know that one's fate is tied up with one's community and with changing inequitable laws and social policies. (p. 178–9)

While at the individual level success can be presented as an opportunity to work for the common good, at the collective level success can be found as leaders work with community members in improving schools. Building relationships outside schools and collaborating with those holding a broader perspective may mitigate the internalisation of dominant discourses that narrow the scope of leadership. The creation of relationships at all levels of the system has been highlighted by Higham, Hopkins and Matthews (2009). They stressed that to change the impact of socio-economic context on school improvement requires 'working, negotiating and building networks of stakeholders' (p. 50). Below I argue that involvement of good followers in leadership work – a topic that gets far too little attention – is essential in developing equity and excellence.

### **2.7.3 The Benefits of Good Followers**

The reality in diverse schools is one where good leaders depend on good followers. Although this topic has received little attention (Kellerman, 2008), in

recent years followers have become important to their leaders in the same way that leaders are important to their followers. While followers by definition lack authority, at least in relation to their superior, they do not by definition lack power and influence. This is the reason for leaders being encouraged now to take their followers into account and treat them well. In the last couple of years, the importance of followers as an integral part of the leadership process has been acknowledged. As Collinson (2006) noted, an increasing number of writers argue that 'exemplary', 'courageous' and 'star' followers are a precondition for 'successful organisations' (p. 179). Rejecting the common stereotype of followers as 'timid, docile sheep', Elmore (2004) notes '[in] knowledge-intensive enterprises like teaching and learning there is no way to perform these complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership among roles in the organisation' (p. 14). It must be noted that the proliferation of popular terms such as empowerment, distributed and team leadership still obscures the fact that power relationships persist. While many if not most organisational hierarchies have been flattened in recent years, leaders and managers generally remain in control. Most organisations still have systems and structures in which superiors control their subordinates.

Literature on sustaining leadership in complex times suggests that having good followers or 'second change agents' is crucial. Diverse contexts do not just challenge leader's competence, they challenge collective competence to a large extent. Thus, the answers to equity and excellence cannot come from high. The school needs both leaders and followers because the solutions to collective challenges must come from many places. The study takes the view that successful schools are those that are lucky enough to have both. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century fewer people can wield great power, however 'great' they may be. Leaders are less able than they were before to be in complete control and therefore both leaders and followers can act as agents for change. Leadership then must consider the relationship of leaders and followers as well as the setting and the distinctive performance abilities of those involved. This approach to leadership seeks to illuminate the social processes that form leadership within a

particular context.

Collaboration is, therefore, essential but it cannot happen without first connecting across differences. Leadership scholars, for example, argue that a functional requirement of organising in contemporary society is fostering and strengthening relational bonds among stakeholders with differing perspectives (Fletcher and Kaufer, 2003). While 'good leadership demands collaboration', this work extends this finding, arguing that we need to focus on the 'bridging and managing differences' side in order for collaborative work to advance equity and excellence. Thus, addressing diversity within a complex web of interconnected yet separate actors is not easy.

One of the key issues, and a problematic one, is the relationship between the individual and the group. Kellerman (2008) notes that

most of the limited research and writing on subordinates has tended to either explain their behaviour in the context of leaders' development rather than followers' or mistakenly assume that followers are amorphous, all one and the same. (p.87)

Understanding and appreciating the differences among followers can have critical implications for how leaders should lead and managers should manage. Reviews of the current discussion have given way to perspectives that attend to the 'space between' leaders and followers, thus giving the relational processes of leadership.

#### **2.7.4 Leading Teaching and Learning**

No appropriate answer has been received on how leaders lead culturally sensitive teaching and learning in diverse schools. The role of leaders in engaging teachers in developing curriculum and assessment, mentoring and coaching others, and leading professional development has been recognised by top-ranked nations (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In addition, school leaders are typically bridge



builders who strive to 'create caring and/or emancipatory spaces for students, parents, teachers, and other constituents in the school organization' (Lopez, Gonzalez and Fierro, 2006, p. 67; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2000). Thus, an important challenge facing principals is how to make the curriculum, and particularly learning and teaching, more sensitive and responsive to minority students (Walker, Dimmock and Stevenson, 2005). As Battiste (2008) notes, 'where [minorities] languages, heritages, and communities are respected, supported, and connected to...holistic learning, educational successes among [minority] students can be found' (p. 88). Thus, such connections nourish student learning and ensure that their culture and ways of knowing are not replaced by educational practices and reforms. The principal's task becomes helping teachers realise that their practices are cultural in origin and that modifying their pedagogical practices in response to students' differences is of paramount importance. Sleeter and Grant (1987) in an early and influential analysis of the field noted that teaching and learning needs to be adapted for students who are different from the 'mainstream' or 'dominant' group of students. Researchers continue to emphasise leaders' understanding of the cultures that their students bring to the school, as well as the ways these influence how students learn (Walker and Cheong, 2009). In fact, Lee (2009) illustrates the complex and fundamental role that culture plays in learning within different disciplines. She concludes that 'research base about how culture can be strategically leveraged to support learning provides important guidance to our efforts' (p. 246).

Similar to Lee's rejection of learning as a singular pathway of progression (Rogoff, 2003), Freire criticises the authoritarian and manipulative 'banking' pedagogy in which students 'receive' knowledge in a manner that denies the validity of ontological and epistemological productions by the learner and the learner's community. In this banking pedagogy, which Friere opposes, students are also supposed to digest useful knowledge and information with little reference to their surrounding socio-political context. Rather, learning in one's own terms is viewed not as taking place in a vacuum but as collective learning activities within the community context. Thus to truly educate students, one

needs a political engagement in order to improve community life and engage social and political structures. In order to do this, Friere emphasised a dialogical relationship between the teacher and students, where both are learners, as opposed to the banking concept of education (with students as depositories of learning). Exchanging knowledge suppressed superficial relations. Learners need to know, understand, listen to and respect each other (Akkari and Mesquida, 2008).

School leaders, therefore, need the vision, capacity and policy support to create much more productive schools where learning can flourish. As students are embedded in a web of social identities, schools have to be places that support good leadership and good teaching. It is simply too dangerous to attribute schooling behaviours to a singular racial, ethnic, or cultural identity. The next section takes the issue of social identity further.

### **2.7.5 Social Identity Work**

Educational leadership research reveals limited examples on the identity function of leadership. Several researchers focused on diminishing the existence or salience of differences between different minority groups (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner et al., 1989; Gaertner et al., 1990; Lindsfold, 1978). According to this line of research, if one can replace differing group goals with a common goal, groups are likely to find that they have little basis for hostility. Indeed, they may find that they have no substantive basis for continuing to see each other as distinct groups. To improve cooperation groups replace subordinate (us and them) group identities with superordinate (we) identities. Such recategorisation can heighten attention to group members' similarities and decrease attention to their differences, thereby successfully reducing bias. The value of creating a common in-group identity has been demonstrated by several studies (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2008). Laboratory studies have demonstrated that diverse interventions that produce more-inclusive representations of different groups, such as fostering cooperation, enhancing perceptual similarity and inducing

positive affect, systematically reduce bias. These results have been replicated in many field settings and in different cultures. Salience of group identities and goals must also be closely linked to and consistent with their group membership to avoid any distraction and potential conflict (Hogg, 2009 ). This does not merely mean that membership and group identities and goals must coexist and both be salient. The organisation must emphasise the vital contribution of each one's identity to the organisation's identity.

The forces of social identity can act as powerful determinants of positive relations. Social identity posits that a person defines the self along a dimension from personal identity, as a unique individual with distinct characteristics, including traits and attributes, which specify how one differs from others (Banaji and Prentice, 1994), to collective identity, as the embodiment of a social collective that reflects shared characteristics and goals. When personal identity is more salient, an individual's needs, standards, beliefs and motives better predict behaviour. In contrast, when social identity is more strongly activated, 'people come to perceive themselves more as interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others' (Turner et al., 1987, p. 50). Under such conditions, collective needs, goals and standards become primary.

Emphasising group boundaries, increasing the sense of 'we-ness', often strengthens the position of leaders, who are subsequently seen as more prototypical and thus representative of the group (Hogg, 2001). Leaders who more closely reflect the prototypical characteristics of the group perceive more popular supports, are seen as more charismatic, and are more influential. However, emphasising one group identity may have the potential effect of diminishing the unique benefits of diversity discussed earlier such as problem solving and task accomplishment.

## **2.8 Preparing School Leaders for Diverse Schools**

Whereas other countries have developed leadership programmes for educational leadership, the current situation in Cyprus is one where leaders are only prepared through a limited number of seminars at an early stage in their careers as principals. However, even in countries where a variety of leadership programmes exist, educators enrol in such programmes hoping someone will help make sense of dynamic school cultures only to frequently experience minimal coursework related to cultural diversity or complex community cultures (Herrity and Glassman, 1999; Parker and Hood, 1995). They may also find faculty less than interested in or committed to multiculturalism, cross-cultural leadership, or the education of minority children (Parker and Hood, 1995; Riehl, 2000). In fact, researchers suggest that educational administration faculty have limited knowledge about how to prepare educational leaders for work with culturally diverse populations (Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian, 2006).

Evidence to inform policy and practice is essential in order to build capacity to achieve the national vision. There is, however, relatively little evidence to inform the development of leadership practice in diverse schools (Dantley, 2002; Grogan and Andrews, 2002). There is an urgent need to extend the range, depth and quality of evidence to inform the practice of leadership and the processes of developing leaders in such schools. A viable theory of leadership development needs to take into account the situational determinants and operating context of the organisation. Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007) demonstrate the need to develop particular leadership competencies, in line with the defining characteristics and challenges of the organisation in question. The key question then remains; how does one translate the experiences of leading in diverse schools effectively into useful guidelines for educational practice and development?

The challenge to create programmes that prepare educators who reflect understanding, appreciation and respect for diversity is great (Lomotey, 1995).

Although there is a growing number of programmes that include a focus on equity and excellence (Evans, 2007a), there are still relatively few nuanced qualitative accounts of the dilemmas school leaders face as they struggle towards equity and excellence for minority students. While there are many accounts of 'successful' school leaders in journals, books, in Anderson's (2009) words 'this tends to be a celebratory genre that glosses over the ways that leaders navigate the deep dilemmas they face and their victories, defeats, and compromises' (p. 180). More importantly, there is a need for more accounts with leaders who face dilemmas, contradictions and social identity issues daily.

### **2.8.1 Defining Leadership Development**

Although there is some general agreement in the literature about the critical features of leadership practice and leadership development, there is little empirical support for the efficacy of these programme elements or design features (Bush, 2008). In fact, there is little evidence of their impact on candidate performance or how their behaviours, knowledge and attitudes have been shaped by their experiences in the programme. Some research suggests that leadership development is likely to be promoted by programmes that (1) have a well-defined and well-integrated theory of leadership for school improvement that frames and integrates the programme; (2) use of preparation strategies that maximise learning, learning transfer and leadership identity formation; (3) provide strong content and field experiences in leadership preparation that are intellectually challenging and offer comprehensive, coherent and relevant experiences and high-quality internships (Kagaan, 1998; Orr, 2006). Some preliminary research suggests that when programmes employ innovative features, candidates give higher ratings to both their training and their abilities as school leaders as do members of their staff. For instance, Orr and Barber (2007) found that supportive programme structures, a comprehensive, standards-based curriculum, and broader, more intensive internships were significantly but differentially related to three types of outcomes: leadership knowledge and skills, career intentions and career development.

Whereas leader development is based on a traditional, individualistic conceptualisation of leadership, leadership development has its origins in a more contemporary, relational model of leadership (Day, 2000). Focus on the latter emphasises leadership as a function of the social resources that are embedded in relationships rather than an emergent property of social systems (Salancik et al., 1975). Thus, leadership development that occurs through the development of individual leaders is no longer desirable. Thinking development as a participatory process is a more complex way of thinking about leadership and leadership development. Day (2000) notes:

the distinction between leader development and leadership development should not be taken as edict for organisations to choose one approach over the other. Either approach is incomplete by itself. Developing individual leaders without concern for reciprocal relations among people or their interactions within a broader social context ignores the research demonstrating that leadership is a complex interaction between individuals and their social and organizational environments. (p. 605)

A proper investment in individual preparation becomes essential, otherwise policy makers run the risk of placing people in challenging developmental situations that they are unable to handle. The preferred approach is to link leader development with leadership development such that the development of leadership transcends but does not replace the development of individual leaders. It has been said that a bridge must be well anchored on either side for effective development to occur (Kegan, 1994). Thus, developing the individual leader is equally as important as developing leadership.

In an attempt to provide a foundational logic for what constitutes leadership development the present study proposes that leadership is a dynamic and complex process that encapsulates the full development of individuals as they engage in complex, adaptive challenges. As leadership development occurs more

and more in context, the type of training that occurs external to one's organisation will also change. Teaching leaders and followers to process, interpret and reflect as opposed to developing a particular style or behaviour needs to become more the norm than the exception.

### **2.8.2 Setting the Stage of Leadership Development**

Global interest in the preparation and development of school leaders continues to be driven first and foremost by the policy logic that leadership makes a difference in reform implementation, school improvement and student learning (Leithwood et al., 2007). Although preparation and development of educational leaders evolves over the years, there is no overabundance of scholarship in the area of administrator preparation. Murphy and Vriesenga's (2004) review of empirical work on preparation showed that slightly less than 3% of the 2000 plus articles from 1975 to 2002 are empirically anchored investigations on administrator preparation. Despite the fact that over the past two decades, associations, consortiums and commissions have distributed countless reports urging change in educational leadership-preparation programmes, traditional literature on educational leadership preparation gives minimal attention to issues relating to issues of diversity (Rusch, 2004).

A critical aspect of the diversification of schooling in Cyprus is the preparation of Cypriot school leaders. Given the increasing number of schools with diversity populations, leadership theory, preparation and practice must be approached from a broader perspective – a perspective that includes the scholarship and knowledge of minority students. It is imperative that leadership preparation programmes provide theoretical knowledge and practical experiences that prepare future leaders for these realities. Although most leadership learning in Cyprus takes place in schools, this does not mean it is always of a high quality, or positive. A report from the National College of School Leadership (2007), pointed out that 'leadership must grow by design rather than by default' (p. 17) because there can sometimes be quite a bit of negative learning. This means that

leadership development itself must be redesigned. This thesis seeks to broaden the knowledge and understandings of leadership development in diverse schools and in turn increase the opportunities for principals to lead.

The preparation function in Cyprus remains in the MOEC without any linkages between university faculty and school-based administrators. The monopolistic position of the MOEC and the increasing need for productive avenues other than the MOEC place a number of challenges for diverse schools. It is noteworthy that in contrast to other European countries, higher education institutions in Cyprus have not retained a leading role in the development of leadership programmes. In fact, Sharp et al.'s (2005) study showed that research engagement has the potential to empower schools and staff to incorporate a virtuous cycle of enquiry, critique and improvement into well-planned and targeted development.

### **2.8.3 Exploring the Context of Leadership Preparation**

The literature overview offers several models of leadership development and a number of insights into leadership development needs in rapidly changing educational contexts. For example, Crow (2001) stresses that leadership development needs to equip individuals to live with ambiguity and to handle complexity. This implies a form of leadership development that is context specific and situational. Rather than development covering all kinds of schools, leadership development should be based firmly within participants' leadership contexts. Duke et al. (2007) argue that

gaining resources and support for generic prescriptions to address generic problems is far easier and more straightforward than trying to differentiate responses to troubling situation [as a result] principal preparation programmes, for the most part, train individuals to lead schools in general, not specific schools facing particular problems. (p. 3)

In contrast, research by Campbell, Fullan and Glaze (2006) demonstrates the strategies being used to achieve district-wide improvement in literacy and



numeracy at the elementary school level. Principals participating in professional development referred to professional development as 'at the elbow', in which two professionals work together to solve a dilemma of professional practice. Principals also commented that the walk-through training they received enabled them to identify what to look for in terms of literacy improvement strategies.

Leadership development should also recognise the local and national contexts within which leaders operate. It is necessary to develop a better understanding of the conditions or contextual factors needed to enable the development of effective leaders. With such an understanding, senior management can develop the conditions necessary to facilitate the growth of future leaders. School leaders who hesitate to challenge local norms may perpetuate a system of schooling that marginalises people who are considered different. This means that leadership development should be based on the relationships that occur within the leadership situation in response to particular issues or challenges. It is therefore important to bridge theory and practice, to make connections between programmes and the broader social context, to explain to leaders how they might take an active part in bringing about social change, and to validate and incorporate with course content adult learners' personal knowledge and experience. However, research on the cultural context is still dismissed as unimportant for preparation programmes, and only a few scholars have recommended the addition of a cultural perspective in the preparation of school leaders (Young, Peterson and Short, 2002).

The field of educational administration has a rather lengthy history of training individual skills and competencies (leader development) and not growing contextual relationships (leadership development). In fact, Day (2000) argues that organisations continue to conceptualise leadership as an individual construct (building human capital) and not a social construct, thus restricting more complex, systematic approaches (building social capital). At the heart of this perspective is the understanding that:

leadership is more collective in nature than the individual; that is, leadership inheres not in the individual characteristics and traits of people in positions of authority, but in the way authority and responsibility are focused, defined, and distributed in organisations. (Elmore, 2003, p. 204)

While scholars attending the profession of school administration have struggled over an appropriate knowledge base for preparation programmes (Donmoyer, 1999), they devoted remarkably little energy to conceptualising and studying the context that develops the preparatory function (Murphy, 2006). In response to these issues, one needs to explain the blend of the individual mental work of leadership thinking with the actual practices of leading.

### **2.9 Concerns About Preparation Programmes**

Empirical research on leadership development has various implications on leadership development. First, there is a lack of agreement with regard to which leadership theory to use. The problem is that leadership development programmes may have their own preferences for one theory over another, and consequently adopt a particular leadership theory without a critical and empirical assessment of whether other theories may have been more appropriate for the demands of leadership being addressed (Collins and Holton, 2004). Thus, choosing one theory over another can have substantial impact on leadership performance. Second, most educational leadership programmes continue to espouse theory that is dominated by one (or a mixture) of four theoretical foundations: rational, mechanistic, organic and/or bargaining models (Young and McLeod, 2001). A study by Young, Mountford and Skrla (2006) found that students during transformational learning as a teaching strategy, demonstrated resistance to discussing diversity issues; the lack of forums for conversation about the materials and inadequate time for reflection on the materials were key barriers to their ability to internalise the material and change personal and professional behaviours. In contrast, Rucinski and Bauch (2006) found that curricular strands that focused on reflective practice, ethical and moral beliefs

and actions are perceived by programme graduates as effective for enabling them to pursue and realise equity and excellence. This literature suggests that effective leadership development can only be developed when the needs of participants are fully known and strategies for meeting these needs are understood.

Although Murphy (2006) cites the work of several leading scholars who have argued that school administration is largely a moral activity, his recommendations focus much more on the 'intellectual infrastructure supporting the profession' and thus more directly address the intellectual or academic capacity of leaders (i.e. improving knowledge and skills) than the moral and dispositional development of leaders. Similarly, Grogan and Andrews (2002) defined development as a series of ongoing changes in terms of knowledge and skill that occur through multiple learning experiences. Emphasis of leadership on skills and knowledge or what Avolio and Chan (2008) named 'surface' learning has been the focus of most of empirical research, theorisation and leadership training. Equally important, however, is the fact that leadership development evaluation has also been limited to a surface level of learning. Evaluations of whether new leadership skills are acquired are often measured by leadership scales, derived from the associated leadership theory. These scales tend to measure observable behaviours of the new skills and thus focus on surface learning. Evaluations that focus on surface learning mainly consist of post-training feedback and knowledge content assessments. Thus, leadership development, as Avolio and Chan (2008) conclude, 'must demonstrate a change in leadership that has an impact on real performance' (p. 219), and only theories of leadership, which have been identified as worthy by empirical evidence, must be included in leadership development programmes. Therefore, an integral component of leadership development is the development of an evaluation framework, which measures whether training has been successful.

Avolio and Chan further argue that in order for leadership development to occur there must be evidence of leadership related-learning at both a surface and deep level. In contrast to surface learning, deep learning places an emphasis on the

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

internal dynamics of the person, whereby he or she relates knowledge from difference domains as well as experiences and integrates them into a larger whole. Deep learning is therefore evaluated on the extent to which leaders have applied their learning and changed their behaviours and on the attainment of desired organisational outcomes as a result of changed behaviours. Avolio and Chan (2008) argue that deep learning is avoided because behavioural assessments may take the form of lengthy interviews or multisource feedback. They further argue that deep learning is necessary as it:

goes beyond overt signs of the behaviours and skills to be mastered...to what is being signified (i.e., meanings, context, assumptions, etc.) [in order] to achieve a better understanding of what is to be learned (p. 218).

For example, Burke and Collins (2005) noted that in addition to covering technical job skills, such programmes should focus on self-awareness, changing attitudes, building teams and improving interpersonal interactions. These competencies are believed to be instrumental keys to organisational performance. Deep learning has an impact on one's implicit understanding of leadership, one's self-concept and one's role as a leader.

Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian (2006) have proposed a framework aimed towards preparing leaders for equity and excellence. Although such a framework might be used in the training of leaders, however, it cannot be used as one way to conduct an assessment of leadership preparation programmes for equity and excellence like those described above. As Capper et al. (2006) point out, 'to be thorough about implementing all aspects of the framework in a preparation programme will require a hypersensitive assessment of our preparation practices and to do so will appear daunting at best' (p. 220). In fact, research on assessing leadership preparation programmes, their content, delivery and outcomes, is not supportive (Murphy, 2006). This omission could be responsible due to the complexity of measuring the impact of leadership programmes and the difficulty of isolating all the different elements affecting school leaders and leadership

development in schools. Earley and Evans (2004) point out 'that broad-brush evaluations, including those making use of 'baseline' data, are likely to be of limited value' (p. 336). Allio (2005) adds that it is important that leadership development programmes first establish a metric for assessing leadership effectiveness, and then design experiments that can establish a causal or statistically significant relationship between training initiatives and leadership competency.

Successful leadership development processes also depend on the ability to encourage participants to reflect on learning experiences in order to promote transfer of knowledge and skills to work contexts. It is essential that leaders be given opportunities to practise new skills and knowledge in real work settings. Since leadership development entails both the understanding of concepts and the ability to practise them, it is important that educators draw from a broad spectrum of pedagogical tools to align theory with application (Morrison et al., 2003). Day (2000) warns that:

academic researchers need to first transcend the outdated notion that leadership development occurs only through specially designed programmes held in particular locations. Instead, it is a continuous process that can take place anywhere. (p. 586)

The developmental value of experience is well documented across experiential and cognitive learning theories. Experiential theories, such as those developed by (Knowles, 1975; Kolb, 1984; Marsick and Watkins, 1990), propose that learning occurs as individuals engage in challenging experiences and then reflect on the outcomes of those experiences. Cognitive theories suggest that knowledge structures grow and develop when they are challenged by novel information obtained via experience (Ausubel, 1968).

The Cyprus educational system has yet to recognise the value of field-based experiences. In recent years, researchers have emphasised the need for robust

internships (Southworth, 1995) and mentoring (Gross, 2009). In the UK, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) provides job-embedded, long-term professional development, including opportunities for networking among principals, access to research on evidence-based interventions to improve student learning, and processes to document and assess learning gains. NCSL was described as 'the most impressive educational leadership programme identified (Levine, 2005, p. 57).

### **2.10 Summary**

This chapter considered research related to leadership for equity and excellence, and it discussed how scholars have dealt with such a complex topic. It was argued that finding out how leaders might assist teachers in providing equitable opportunities for students to learn is of immense importance. In fact, developing equity and excellence in schools is a growing concern to many education researchers and practitioners, as evidenced by various scholars. Despite calls for valuing diversity at all levels of education, schooling continues to be heavily influenced by pressures gravitating toward sameness.

Literature on leadership development has raised a number of concerns. Leadership preparation programmes often adopt one theory over another, they fail to understand participants' strategies for meeting those needs and they fail to address the moral and dispositional needs of leaders. It was also emphasised that leadership development lacks the necessary evaluation mechanisms to test whether development had an impact on performance. Instead, evaluation of deep learning – rather than surface learning – shows whether leaders have applied their learning and changed behaviours. Leadership development programmes could benefit from more field-based experiences that include internships and mentoring as core components. The next chapter presents the research methods used for answering the two research questions.

## CHAPTER

### 3

## Research Methodology

This research uses *case study research design* to examine leadership practices and processes in the diverse schools in Cyprus. Since the study of leadership involves considerations of context, process, meaning, and so on (Ospina and Foldy, 2010), a considerably detailed approach is called for. The central research questions of this study focus on what is the role of leaders in developing equity and excellence and how can leaders be developed to lead such schools? In answering these questions a constructionist lens is essential but not complete. Since qualitative research helps to shed light on phenomena that are poorly understood (Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Yin, 2009), in this case study design the quantitative data played a supporting role to the qualitative analysis of leadership practices and processes.

In the first section of this chapter I justify my choice of case study design. Next, I present the various philosophical worldviews or paradigms around the use of qualitative and quantitative data. Next I describe the two phases of data collection. The study engaged a two-stage approach to data collection: a preliminary phase and a focused phase. The preliminary phase of data collection served an informative function. The next phase used case study methods to track complex processes and effectively reveal the rationale of organisational members as they make decisions about diversity (Santos and Eisenhardt, 2005).

### 3.1 Case Study Justification

A distinction between case study and ethnography approaches is crucial, as there

is a considerable overlap between the two labels. Ethnography was primarily associated with social anthropological research, whereby the investigator visits a (usually) foreign land, gains access to a group (for example, a tribe or village), spends a considerable amount of time with that group with the aim of uncovering its culture, watches and listens to what people say and do, engages people in conversations to probe specific issues of interests, and takes copious field notes (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). In short, ethnography is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting. The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Similarly, Patton (1990) claims that an ethnomethodologist needs to 'elucidate what a complete stranger would have to learn to become a routinely functioning member of a group, a program, or a culture' (p. 74). The collection of data, therefore, in 'natural settings, in other words in those that have not been specifically set up for research purposes, gives a distinctive character to ethnographic work. For example, in the case of interviewing, access cannot be assumed to be available automatically, relations will have to be established, and identities co-constructed (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007).

Whereas ethnography is inward looking, aiming to uncover the tacit knowledge of culture participants, case study is outward looking, aiming to delineate the nature of phenomena through detailed investigation of individual cases and their contexts. In Platt's (1992) words, case study strategy begins with 'a logic of design....a strategy to be preferred when circumstances are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whether the circumstances' (p. 46). Yin (2009) identifies the scope of a case study:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (p. 18)



Case study research is therefore appropriate for the purposes of this study because I want to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth. In contrast to ethnography, cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures (Stake, 1995). Kowalski (2004) argues that case studies are particularly appropriate for the study of educational leadership, given the need for detailed, and contextual descriptions of (as is frequently the case in diverse schools) very sensitive data. The case study approach allowed me to develop rich and deep descriptions of the four schools and the activities within those schools (Yin, 2003), which served to generate theoretical insight (Weick, 2007).

Since contexts are unique and dynamic, case studies investigate and report the dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other instances in a unique instance (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Yin (2003) describes a case study as the investigation of 'a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (p. 13). To Yin (1994), a key point is that 'the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident', thereby requiring a 'comprehensive research strategy' rather than the use of a particular data gathering methodology (p. 13). In stating, in his definition, that the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly demarcated, Yin (1994) seemed clear that the case study would necessarily include data relating to that context because the researcher 'deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions' (p. 13). Contextual issues were shown in previous chapters to be important to the phenomenon of leadership, in the form of policy, school cultures and organisational structures, so Yin's specific counsel of inclusion would certainly seem appropriate for the purposes of this research.

Moreover, Yin (2009) notes that case studies are suitable when exploring complex issues such as leadership processes. Case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation. When studying leadership, case study research offers

insight into practices, processes and outcomes in the given setting. Since the study aimed at pushing theories of school leadership processes further, case study methodology facilitated 'theory building', or the process of developing new propositions about how and why a phenomenon unfolded (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007)

Case studies are not sufficiently specific for using replication logic to disconfirm a theory, but detailed case studies are used to ground the development of a theory. Yin (2003) points out that comparative analysis of a given case can often be achieved by comparing several subunits or perspectives of participants embedded in the overall case, as well as by observing two or more cases that provide contrasts or comparisons on the research question being investigated. These variations often rely on qualitative data that provide greater richness and nuance in understanding the nature or development of a phenomenon than variations among quantitatively measured variables and their statistical relationships.

The use of case studies in the context of diverse schools is also in line with the recommendations by various researchers such as Midlock (2010). Hence, the appropriate research methodology for a study that attempts to extend existing leadership towards equity and excellence literature is the case study research methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lee, 1999a; Stake, 1995). In particular, Yin (2009) strongly suggests that the evidence from a multiple-case study is considered more robust than that from a single-case study and findings based on this method are considered to have high reliability and validity.

### **3.2 Collection of Case Study Evidence**

The present study used qualitative data as a primary source of data. Quantitative data served a supporting role. The sections below illustrate the relevance of qualitative and quantitative methods for the purposes of this research.

### **3.2.1 The Relevance of Qualitative Data**

Previous chapters emphasised that leadership is a dynamic and complex social process that involves the work and the commitment of many actors. This approach implies entering the empirical reality of leadership with an explicit intention: transcending concerns with interpersonal dynamics to explore what goes on as groups and communities engage together in efforts to produce collective achievements through concerted work (Drath, 2001; Uhl-Bien, 2006). As leadership is found in the work of a group and not of specific individuals, developing a qualitative or a constructionist methodology to match understandings of leadership as a social process becomes essential. Social constructionists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Thus, the goal of qualitative researchers is to develop concepts that help to understand social phenomena in natural settings, with emphasis on meanings, experiences and views of participants. Thus, qualitative research is based on 'multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, and with the intent of developing a theory or pattern' (Creswell et al., 2003, p. 18). Furthermore, meaning-making processes are embedded in historically grounded structures of power and are influenced by the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that characterise social relationships. Therefore, constructionists resist the tendency to incorporate only elite voices and experiences into the dominant narratives of leadership. Constructionist researchers also address the process of interactions among individuals. They argue that subjective meanings are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Moreover, these researchers recognise that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences.

The present study takes the view that a detailed account of leaders' practices in the diverse schools of Cyprus is needed. Although there has been previous

research carried out in culturally diverse schools in other countries, the context of Cyprus has not been under vigorous investigation. Therefore, qualitative methods are well suited to exploratory investigations of problems, such as the present one, about which little is known (Bryman, 2001). Because development of theories in organisational research often fails to represent the 'lived experience' adequately for purposes of meaningful action in the real world (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), the use of a constructionist lens in leadership research is essential.

### 3.2.2 The Use of Quantitative Data

Despite the important philosophical differences that exist among the three research communities: qualitative, quantities and mixed methods, Van de Ven (2007) contends that:

by themselves quantitative data provide a skeletal configuration of structural regularities, often devoid of life, flesh, and soul. Qualitative data, by themselves, are like an amoeba, rich with life but absent apparent structure. Only by combining quantitative and qualitative data...we come to understand the richness of life in its varied regularities. (p. 230)

The objective behind the use of quantitative research was to combine information that quantitative and qualitative approaches provide for understanding leadership practices and processes. But before unmasking the utility of using both methods it is important to note few words about my background and how that influenced my choice of using a quantitative in conjunction with qualitative research.

My education background enabled me to develop core quantitative skills and techniques for social research. This is due to the fact that I was doing a combination of psychology modules so that my degree is recognised by the British Psychological Society for the Graduate Basis for Registration, which is an essential step for further training in psychology-related professions such as educational psychology. In my dissertation I used path analysis techniques to allow for the examination of direct and indirect effects between variables in a

predetermined model. In disciplines such as psychology there has been a tradition that only numeric data are of relevance, therefore, I was encouraged to engage in quantitative methods and in particular collecting data and analysing them with statistical tests.

Apart from my education background, in conceptualising the use of both quantitative and qualitative research studies, various paradigmatic assumptions are still being debated. For example, paradigm purists argue that paradigmatic integrity should be maintained, as paradigms are fundamentally different and have incompatible assumptions about human nature and the world, and so knowledge claims cannot be mixed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Smith and Heshusius, 1986). However, many researchers have stated that the paradigmatic differences have been overdrawn (Brewer and Hunter, 2006) and that paradigmatic incompatibility makes dialogue among researchers less productive (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Researchers further acknowledge that philosophical differences are reconcilable through new guiding paradigms that actively embrace and promote mixing methods. For example, the pragmatic stance Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) reject traditional dualism and prefers action to philosophising by privileging inquiry questions over assumptive worlds. This stance endorses methodological pluralism because, in practice, most research questions cross paradigmatic boundaries. In other words, one should choose methods that are most likely to provide evidence useful for answering important research questions given the inquiry objectives, research context and the available resources. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) argue that the differences between the two research communities 'should be conceived pragmatically as positions along a continuum' (p. 103).

As it was noted earlier, this research aims to unearth the work of leaders in the diverse schools of Cyprus, and therefore 'map' the construction and practice of leadership across multiple actors. The research questions of this research place importance on the knowledge generated from leaders' lived experiences in diverse schools. Although the case studies that follow adopt an inductive

approach, it is my belief that the ongoing phase of the inductive-deductive research cycle will be important in some stages during the research process in order to enable me to answer the research questions adequately. Because theories on leadership in diverse contexts are in early stages (e.g. Harris, 2009) the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods will enable the development of new theory. In fact, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) suggest that researchers should use both methods when there is a clear need for exploratory questions that seek to verify and generate theory. This research approach may also point to previously unrecognised causal relationships that are amenable to study with quantitative methods only.

Although quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies allow for a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon, according to Morse's system two factors need to be taken into consideration when using quantitative and qualitative data: (1) whether a project is qualitative oriented or quantitative oriented; (2) which aspect of the design is dominant. Indeed, the priority of one method over the other is an important dimension predetermined before data collection starts (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). As this is an exploratory study, a qualitative driven orientation was adopted. Qualitative approach was the dominant methodological focus with quantitative approach playing a secondary role.

### **3.3 Framing the Study**

This research included two phases of inquiry. The purpose of phase one was exploratory. In-depth interviews with school principals were used to develop an understanding of leadership and diversity in practice and thus inform the in-depth case studies that follow. In the second phase, mixed methods were used for in-depth exploration of four schools. The first phase of the inquiry is described below.

### 3.3.1 Research Context

Cyprus consists of elementary 349 schools. Each school has one principal and in most cases two vice principals and 12 teachers, although the number of vice principals and teachers depends on the size of the school. The school demographics for each school also differ. The majority of schools have become increasingly diverse in recent years. Table 1 provides demographic composition of student population for School Year 2008-2009. A small number of schools are placed in highly segregated neighbourhoods with students attending predominantly minority schools.

**TABLE 3.1: Demographic Composition of Student Population in Cyprus for School Year 2008-2009**

<b>Student background</b>	<b>Greek Cypriots</b>	<b>Turkish Cypriots</b>	<b>Maronites, Armenians and Latins</b>	<b>Minority students</b>
<b>3 Total</b>	26,241	94	184	5,214

### 3.3.2 Phase One

Phase one intended to set the state for the next phase by assisting the research in developing relevant lines of questions. Phase took place between September and October 2007. In particular, phase one data aimed to answer the following general research questions: (1) What successes and challenges do educators face in developing cultural responsive, equitable and quality teaching in light of their schools' increasing diversity? (2) Are leaders well prepared to manage diversity? Since phase one involved a qualitative research question, a considerably detailed approach was called for. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) note that the iterative nature of qualitative research can compel the researcher to re-evaluate his or her original research questions, pursue additional lines of inquiry and entertain alternative conclusions, as long as these adjustments are data driven. Thus, an initial qualitative phase was especially

useful in exploratory studies such as this one, where the specific leadership practices that leaders engage in Cyprus have not yet been analysed (Yin, 2009). In addition to enabling research questions to emerge, a qualitative initial phase is highly advantageous in choosing and building the instruments required for the next phase (Creswell et al., 2008).

### **3.3.2.1 Sampling**

The sampling of the case studies is crucial for later analysis, as the choice of the sample tends to influence the results of the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For this exploratory phase, I purposely sampled the schools based on my review of their demographic data and preliminary conversations with participants. The case studies selected were selected from two districts. In selecting case studies, I chose schools with different demographic data. There were two reasons for choosing these five schools. First, research within different school compositions is lacking (Billot, Goddard and Cranston, 2007). Thus, exploring leadership practices in schools with different schools demographics could allow one to see whether the number of minority students has consequences on the work of leaders. Second, the use of a broader sampling scheme – meaning use of both extreme case studies and more typical ones – allows for comparability across cases (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Specifically, it permits making more empirical links between different specialties or schools of thought that emerge from different types of diverse schools in which leadership practices occur. And third, the selected cases were not meant to be representative but to showcase the richness and complexity of leading in diverse schools and to surface themes that merit further research.

### **3.3.2.2 Data Collection**

Phase one included individual interviews with the five principals (approximately one hour long). In particular, the sample consisted individual interviews with five principals and five teachers. I used a stratified random sampling in selecting teachers. Principals consisted of three women and two men, ranging in age from 49 to 62 years of age. Teachers consisted of four women and one man, ranging in



### Chapter Three: Research Methodology

age from 25 to 42. The interview was in depth, one-to-one, face-to-face and towards the conversational in tone. It was aided by a carefully designed and ordered semi-structured schedule in order to allow for an appropriate degree of comparability and ample opportunity for an unobstructed flow of narration. The schedule comprised four sections: leadership practices; challenges and opportunities facing the schools; leadership change in response to particular circumstances; and leadership development.

After arriving at the interview site, consent was obtained from each interviewee. Upon completion of the form, the purpose of the study, the amount of time that would be needed to complete the interview, and plans for using the results from the interview were highlighted to each individual participant. Some time was spent with potential principals and teachers in order to gain their respect and confidence, and in order to become acquainted with their situation. Increased face-to-face contact seemed to affect trust of organisational members towards myself. In addition, the time spent on sites helped me to come closer to the phenomenon being studied, as well as increasing the ways in which organisational members were framing the topic under investigation. Moreover, being sensitive to the viewpoints of participants whose interests are being served in the study were also found to be important. The interviews took place in quiet locations free from distractions, mostly in principals' offices or empty classrooms.

Despite the presence of a semi-structured schedule, some interviews turned into conversations that were more personal and enabled me to move on to intimate conversations. Gadamer (1999) argues that when 'we fall into conversation, or even when we become involved in it...no one knows what will "come out" in a conversation' (p. 383). Further, he writes, 'all this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language used in it beards its own truth within it, i.e., that it reveals something which henceforth exists' (p. 383). This fluid, interpretive technique allowed participants freedom to move the interview as needed to describe their experiences about how the work was done to achieve

successful milestones, considering conflict, obstacles and sometimes failures in the process. To maximise validity of data collection, all interviews were taped, and then the contents of the tapes were transcribed verbatim. The entire process of data collection lasted one month, from September 2008 to October 2008.

#### **3.3.2.3 Transcription and Translation of Data**

The first part of the data analysis involved transcription of interviews and then translating them into the English language. Changing language involves more than a simple change of words. Language not only determines meanings, value or identities, but it is also an important consideration in research, and moving across languages has epistemological and methodological consequences. The difficulties for the translator are due to the fact that while a text can evoke a personal experience with a single word, this word does not have the same evocative impact every time, in every culture or country. Words which exist in one language but not in another, concepts which are not equivalent in different cultures, idiomatic expressions and/or differences among languages in grammatical and syntactical structures are issues that were taken into consideration for the purposes of this study.

It is likely that if I employed other Greek-speaking translators I could have produced different research data. This is because my Greek language is infused with influences from the context in which it was learnt and used. Despite my English-speaking education background and with previous experience in translation during my Greek O-level and A-level studies, some Greek words during the translation evoked for me feelings and events that I struggled to explain in English, and the other way around too. As a researcher, however, I certainly had responsibilities to participants regarding the ways I represented them in writing. Thus, to ensure agreement on the translation of data sources back translation was used. Edwards (1998) argues that back translation ensures agreement of a 'correct' version of a text. Back translation involves the translation of a text that has already been translated into another language back to the original language.

### 3.3.2.4 Coding and Analysis Strategy

Transcripts from the eight interviews were coded into emergent themes. I used an inductive process to develop theory from qualitative data. With 'inductive analysis' major themes are discovered through an analyst's interactions with the data (Patton, 2002, p. 453). According to Katz (1983), inductive analysis allows the researcher to continually create and refine categories in an effort to develop a theory that explains a certain phenomenon. Inductive analysis began at the onset of interviewing and continued as research themes were being written. As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) put it, 'qualitative data analysis is iterative, involving a back-and-forth process between data collection and data analysis' (p. 251).

My close involvement in the transcription and translation processes provided a clear rationale for the analysis of sections of the data and the exclusion of others. Because explicit attention to data management issues is important, data were organised in such a way to avoid problems arising when working with large data volumes. For example Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that when researchers process information they are likely to give undue emphasis to the vivid over the pallid, to the views of the articulate over the ill-informed and to those standing in a close rather than a distant relation to the observer. These tendencies were inhibited by managing data in an efficient way. It was also considered important to pay attention to transcripts, which are often silent about tone, emphasis, facial expressions and body language (Barbour, 2008; Poland and Pederson, 1998).

In the next step all data were read through to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2009). In fact, the transcripts were read in their entirety several times. As Agar suggests 'immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts' (p. 103). Writing memos in the margins of transcripts and fields notes also helped in this initial process of exploring the database.

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For the purposes of this study, I have followed the coding scheme suggested by Creswell (2009) and Miles and Huberman (1994). First, I began detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding is the process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (171 Rossman and Rallis, 1998). As transcripts were read carefully, key words and phrases for each response were highlighted, which then served as the basis for extracting a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping significant statements, i.e. horizontalization of data (Moustakas, 1994), with each statement being given equal weight. During this process, recurring categories or patterns started to emerge from the data. As I moved from one script to another I became ready to create my first preliminary list of themes. After the data were open coded and emergent themes were identified, I organised data into coherent categories. At this point, therefore, coding involved assigning categories to naturally occurring themes in the data. During this process 'the researcher creates as many categories as needed to organise, explain, and assign empirical data to these categories in a coherent fashion' (Lee, 1999b, p. 48).

In the second stage, I proceeded along more analytical lines by recoding; combining codes; and most important, providing rationales for assigning, combining and creating new codes. As I read and re-read the interview transcripts, I assigned preliminary summary labels to each code. For example, when responding regarding the personal qualities that make leaders more or less effective, participants suggested that having strong self-knowledge and awareness of limitations as well as strengths, were all characteristics that a leader needed to be effective. The theme for this group of responses was labeled 'self-awareness'. This process was repeated until enough labels were obtained to sufficiently account for themes across the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It must be emphasised that I developed codes only on the basis of the emerging information collected from participants. However, I followed Merriam's (1998) four important guidelines when working with categories. First, she argues that categories should reflect the purpose of the research. Secondly, categories should be exhaustive; that is, one should be able to place all the data that he/she decided

important or relevant to the study in a category or subcategory. Thirdly, categories should be mutually exclusive. A particular unit of data should fit into only one category. If the exact same unit of data can be placed into more than one category, more conceptual needs to be done to refine the categories. Fourthly, the naming of the category should be as sensitive as possible to what is in the data.

I also tried not to equate coding with analysis. As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) argue, 'the important analytic work lies in establishing the thinking about linkages between data and concepts, not in the mundane process of coding' (p. 27). Similarly, Merriam (1998) notes that the categories or themes are the abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves. Ruona (2005) also suggests that during data analysis, these categories begin to take on their own life apart from the data. She recommends staying close to the data and the 'voices' of the participants. In fact, one of the most commonly mentioned criticisms of the coding approach to qualitative data analysis is the possible problem of losing the context of what is said.

The inductive nature of the analysis led to the third stage of the analysis, an emerging narrative that explained the process of leadership practices. Through this inductive and recursive procedure, I produced a narrative that described the leaders' practices. The final step in data analysis involved making an interpretation or meaning of the data. This is the stage where I tried to go beyond the codes, categories and data bits and understand what the 'whole' is or may be (Dey, 1993). In particular meaning was derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature or theories.

### 3.3.3 Revisiting Research Questions

The purpose of this analysis was to give me an idea of what leadership looks like in practice in the diverse schools of Cyprus. The analysis revealed that the role of school principals in diverse schools is *critically* important. However, it was

found that leaders differ in two important dimensions: while some focused on teaching and learning as a way to enhance the development of academic outcomes, others placed emphasis on the interactions between individuals belonging to different groups. In the former case – school leaders that were focused on academic outcomes – were mostly concerned with issues such as teaching Greek as a second language, differentiated teaching, curriculum relevance and so on. In the latter case, however, they were concerned with bringing together different groups, with different perspectives and often mutual mistrust. For instance these concerns were reflected in their efforts to motivate teachers to acknowledge differences. In so doing, principals achieved peaceful coexistence and positive relations as well as productive use of differences.

While my previous research experience involved research on personality traits, which focused on the individual and cognitive rather than the interactional, my journey to studying leadership started with search for behaviours, styles and characteristics that resided in the leader. But this phase showed that leaders must be able to dip into a deeper reservoir of knowledge and make decisions to resolve conflicts both within themselves as well as surrounding environment. Thus, in developing equity and excellence school leaders differed in two important dimensions: ‘leading personal success’ and ‘leading organisational success’. To lead diversity people have to deal with the dangers of their inner selves as well as their organisational dangers. In developing equity and excellence, leaders often need to make fundamental changes to their values, beliefs, habits, ways of working or ways of life and to mobilise and motivate people towards action. Exploring the experience of leadership in this way, the unit of analysis shifts from the micro-level of individuals to the meso-level of organisations as settings where individuals define, negotiate and give meaning to work.

These findings called for additional in-depth investigation of leadership practices in diverse schools. During phase one the following research questions were developed: (1) What is the role of leadership in developing equity and excellence in Cyprus diverse schools? (2) How can leaders be best prepared to lead such

schools? Below I describe the methodological implications from phase one.

### **3.3.4 Methodological Implications**

Phase one consisted of a number of methodological implications. The use of a sample consisting of schools with different school demographics yielded important differences in leadership practice. The different leadership practices, which were shown in different types of diverse schools, deserve careful systematic description, and this is what I wish to outline in phase two. Such a 'mixture' of cases can provide new empirical data that must be taken into consideration because such cases have the potential for making important contributions that advance scientific knowledge and professional practice. The case study used heterogeneous cases, to produce 'rich' primary data from a subset of critical cases as well as typical cases. This variation also increased my understanding of diverse schools and facilitated the design of a meaningful survey for this population.

While Bryman (2001) notes that qualitative research is on the rise, the majority of it is interview data. For stage two, I needed methods that account for contextual influences in specific organisational settings. My inevitable immersion in school settings over some period of time during phase one has enabled me to observe several contextual influences that might affect leadership practices. To capture the richness of leadership phenomenon I decided to incorporate observational methods. Calder (1977) reminds us that leadership is a subjective phenomenon rooted in the real world, based on observation of the everyday vernacular in real organisations. It arises from observation of social actors making sense of their experience, and it should be studied as it occurs in its natural setting. Moreover, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) say that what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check. In schools, observations can serve as a valuable means of collecting 'outsider' data by recording actual behaviours and organisational practices. Schein (2006) suggested that systematic observations provide a

valuable means of deciphering organisational culture, or the shared meaning, history, formal philosophy, group norms, rituals, espoused values, implicit rules, artifacts and underlying assumptions of those who work in an organisation. Observations should ideally involve the use of both field notes and checklists (Patton, 2002). In this pursuit, ethnographic methods will be useful. As observations are powerful tools for gaining insights into situations, participant observation will be used for phase two. The next section describes the next phase of the inquiry.

### **3.4 Phase Two**

The second part of the study focused on the two research questions relating to the role of leaders in developing equity and excellence in diverse schools. Below I describe how the four schools were selected, followed by data collection methods.

#### **3.4.1 Design**

Case studies represent a single subject as the focus of study. In this instance, use of a multiple-case-study design implies that the study consists of more than a single case (Yin, 2003). In this phase, school units represented the cases and served as the objects of analysis. By adopting a case study approach with four schools, a comparative element was built, allowing for the exploration of multiple perspectives on leadership practices. The choice of a multiple-case-study design is advantageous as multiple case studies have been regarded as producing compelling data because of “replication logic” (p. 47).

This thesis employed the logic of inductive inquiry suitable for investigating phenomena that are relatively poorly understood. The goal of inductive inquiry is to allow new theoretical insights to emerge from rigorous examination of relevant data collected from multiple sources, analysed through constant comparison and validated by ongoing re-examination of the data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994).



A lack of prior theorising about a topic makes the inductive case study approach an appropriate choice of methodology for developing theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Hence, to gain a deeper understanding of leadership practices I employed the logic of inductive case study approach to allow new theoretical insights to emerge from rigorous examination of relevant data collected from multiple sources, analysed through constant comparison and validated by ongoing re-examination of the data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). Data sources included individual interviews, survey, school documentation and school observations. My primary sources of data, however, were accounts of the action of principals in four schools obtained from interviews. The case study method allowed me to examine the principals' role within its real-life context (Yin, 1994). My data collection included examinations of principal, vice-principal and teacher, and their engagement in leadership practices as they played out within its natural context. In addition, this type of context-embedded research allowed me to provide a more a holistic description of, and explanation for the phenomenon, in an effort to understand the work of school leaders.

### **3.4.2 Reliability and Validity**

Multiple cases can both augment external validity, and help guard against observer bias (Merriam, 1998). The use of a single case runs the risk of misjudging a single event, and exaggerating easily available data. Although these risks exist in all case research, they are somewhat mitigated when events and data are compared across cases (Yin, 2009). I built reliability and validity into the research design by utilising standardised semi-structured interview and observation protocols and a survey, and through implementing these measures at multiple sites. Multiple data sources were used to triangulate findings and identify disconfirming evidence (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Triangulation through the use of different methods of data collection can strengthen the validity of research. The issue of internal validity was handled by conducting multiple iterations and follow-ups during the analyses. The problem of reliability was

addressed by drawing up detailed case study protocols and by following the required documentation and transcription standards. Studying different schools and analysing comparative findings increased external validity. I conducted a within-case analysis of the implementation processes at each school and then compared processes across schools to gain both an individualised and a more general assessment of the reform's implementation (Merriam, 1998).

### **3.4.3 Site Selection**

Following Bryman (2001), different schools were invited to take part in the four in-depth case studies. In selecting the four schools purposeful sampling was used. In contrast to schools used for phase one, the schools selected can be defined as schools working towards equity and excellence, that is, organisations that serve minority students' academic needs and interests by providing high-quality education and addressing systemic problems in a way that increases social purpose. Their work combines in different degrees instructional work, organising, promoting values, interventions, advocacy and community building. These features distinguish them from other schools. Schools in the context of Cyprus have been ignored in the literature as a potential source to develop leadership theory. Yet, they could provide a long-term value through breakthrough strategies that help to solve intractable social problems.

The schools that participated in the study were amongst other schools that were awarded by MOEC for the implementation of good practices towards youth risk. Besides 'bringing about change in equity and excellence' the principals met selective criteria of 'participating with consistency in the school's vision' 'building school sustainability', 'engaging in practices characterised by imagination, creativity and science', and 'cooperating with other services and institutions' (MOEC). The assessment of leaders' organisations made them exemplars of success in advancing their missions and suitable subjects with which to pursue my research questions.

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To explore leadership in practice, I examined four schools situated in three districts; three located in urban areas, and one in the district. All schools had experienced rapid cultural shifts in their populations over the past five years. Analysing a small number of cases such as these is critically important as the leadership practices in these schools are 'transparently observable' (Pettigrew, 1990, p. 275). Herriot and Firestone (1983) note that the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is regarded as being more robust.

Due to high turnover of principals in diverse schools, I checked whether awarded-school-principals were the same at the time of the investigation. As this was the case, schools were placed into two groups, namely, predominantly minority schools and integrated or diverse schools. This decision was followed after suggestions by Billot et al. (2007) and as well as findings in phase one that revealed the importance of school demographic composition. Thus, I chose two groups of schools that allowed comparisons within the same issue (leadership towards equity and excellence), in order to show different means of understanding the influence of diverse challenges on leadership. This was done by choosing two predominantly minority schools and two multiracial schools. Table 2 offers a description of the demographic compositions characterising the chosen schools. The four schools therefore were all mixed race in terms of student composition, though the racial majority varied in each. Recommendations from key informants such as teachers and people working at MOEC were also taken into account when selecting cases (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Those who were referred as both instructional principals and who embodied a commitment to enacting equity were chosen. Thus the four schools chosen are relatively high performing in their respective districts. All four principals conducted agreed to participate in the study. While the four schools are not representative of all schools in their respective districts, they are typical of schools that can be classified as 'mixed race' (nominally, at least) in their respective urban and district areas. Description of participants is included in Table 3.

**TABLE 3.2: Names of Schools, Demographic Background of Students Enrolled in the School Years 2007-2008**

School Name	Demographic Background of Students Enrolled in the School Year 2007-2008		Enrolment
	% Cypriots (including Turkish Cypriots)	% Minority	
<b>Athena</b>	16	71	87
<b>Ares</b>	118*	24	139
<b>Leander</b>	72**	68	130
<b>Nestor</b>	80	57	137

\*of which 57 consisted of Turkish-Cypriots

\*\* of which 5 consisted Turkish-Cypriots

**TABLE 3.3: Description of Participants**

School name	Principals' Characteristics		
	Name	Gender	Age
<b>Athena</b>	Marcos	Male	47
<b>Ares</b>	Christopher	Male	45
<b>Leander</b>	Elpida	Female	55
<b>Nestor</b>	Christina	Female	61

### 3.5 Data Collection

According to Yin (2009) a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. My data sources included (a) a review of related school documents and artefacts, (b) semi-structured interviews with principals, vice-principals and teachers, (c) a survey and (d) observations. As was noted earlier, the primary source of data collection was obtained through interviews. Participants included the principal, one vice-principal and a teacher in each school. Two males and two female principals participated in the study.

Site visits were scheduled during October to December 2008 and data collection during site visits ranged from seven to ten days, spanning to eight weeks from first to last visit at each site. A follow-up was carried out in March 2009. Table 4 below gives a timeline for the whole research including phase one. Prior to archival data a handout was given to all potential participants describing the purpose and context of the study. Through discussions with principals at each site, lists were developed of potential interviewees, meetings, activities appropriate for observations, and dates for site visits.

**TABLE 3.4: Research Timeline**

	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Follow-up</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	September-October 2007	-
<b>Phase 2</b>	October-December 2008	February 2009

#### 3.5.1 Documentation and Archival Records

Documentation and archival records were gathered first. The most common documents used are shown in Table 5.

**TABLE 3.5: Archival Data**

<b>Archival records</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
Faculty size	Newsletters
Job descriptions	Student handbooks
Total enrolment	Newspaper articles
Ethnic break-down of students	Policy statements
Teacher-student ratio	Letters to MOEC that related to diversity issues

### 3.5.2 Survey

Prior to data collection I piloted the survey in order to test the adequacy of the research instruments. According to Cohen et al., (2007) piloting a survey is a useful way in checking the clarity of the questionnaire item, instructions and layout; in gaining feedback on the validity of the questionnaire items, the operationalisation of the constructs and the purposes of the research; in eliminating ambiguities or difficulties in wording, and identifying omissions, redundant and irrelevant items. The instrument was reviewed by a principal who made suggestions for further clarification. Several items were deleted, a few items were modified and few additional items were added as a result of this phase of the pilot study. Another principal, who made no further suggestions, then reviewed the revised instrument. An analysis of these results revealed that the survey was clear and comprehensive.

After collecting the various archival data, I administered the survey. The survey was administered first so that any significant findings from the survey could be followed by open-ended questions on the qualitative interview protocol, thereby producing a point of integration between the two components of the study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The surveys were completed by the same teachers and vice-principals selected for interviews. I used a stratified random sampling in selecting teachers and vice-principals. A total of three faculty

members completed surveys and interviews at each school – the principal, the selected vice-principal and a teacher.

The principal survey instrument drew on a number of existing surveys, as well as newly developed items, to evaluate principals' perceptions of their principal preparation programme and on-going professional development opportunities, views of the principalship, self-reported practices and characteristics of their schools. Teacher surveys asked about their principals' attitudes and practices, and the student and organisational contexts in their schools. (Surveys can be found in Appendix B.)

#### **3.5.2.1 Measures**

The survey was designed around four categories of measures. These are listed below.

##### ***School Cultural Competence***

The items from Lindsey, Robins and Terrell (2003) scales adapted to this context were used to assess school's cultural competence. The 13-item scale assesses schools' cultural competence and proficiency and provides a valuable framework for examining how well a school's policies, programmes, practices, traditions, underlying values, and other essential indicators of culture reflect the perspectives of diverse groups in the school and school community (Bustamante, 2006; Lindsey, Roberts and Jones, 2005; Lindsey, Robins and Terrell, 2003). Each participant responded using a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

##### ***School Improvement Strategies and School Climate Conditions Climate***

The items were adopted from Darling-Hammond et al., (2007) scales. I asked principals to rate their school's climate by indicating their degree of agreement to six questions grouped as three measures: accessible quality instruction; instructional coherence and coordination; teacher commitment encouraged and practiced; and student effort and engagement. Participants were asked to rate

their school improvement strategies by indicating their degree of agreement (using a five-point Likert scale) to nine questions grouped as three measures: teacher collaboration, active shared, distributed leadership and data-driven decision making and organisational learning.

### ***Programme Experiences***

The survey included six measures of programme features. These items were based in Hammond et al.'s (2007) research on effective leadership preparation. These items were drawn primarily from Leithwood and colleagues (1996) research on effective leadership preparation. I asked principals how well they felt their initial leadership development programme prepared them for specific leadership tasks (1 = Not at all, to 5 = To a great extent). The learning outcomes included five scale measures of leadership: leading organisational learning (four items), developing schoolwide vision and ethical commitment (three items), leading student and teacher learning (three items), managing operations (three items), and engaging parents and community (two items).

### ***Moderating influences/structures***

Moderating factors measured in the survey include various structures that may help address diversity issues and moderating influences such as support or impediments from the MOEC. Principals' perceptions of MOEC support for the school were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, to 5 = Strongly agree) by five items, such as 'MOEC helps me promote and nurture a focus on teaching' and 'the MOEC supports my school's efforts to improve.'

### **3.5.3 Interviews**

Around nine interviews were conducted at each site with a range of school personnel for one to two hours using open-ended questions about leadership practices related to diversity efforts. At each school, I interviewed the school principal at least four times and vice-principal and teacher twice each. In total, data were collected from 36 recorded and transcribed interviews lasting 60 to 120



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minutes each. Interviews took place in two locations: either principal's office or in empty classrooms. Interviews with principals took place in their office and interviews with vice-principals and teachers were mostly taken in the empty classrooms. Only the interviewer and the interviewee were present in the room during each interview. Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 below illustrate the dates, the number and timing of interviews that were undertaken.

Each interview followed a predetermined interview schedule allowing in-depth probing as appropriate. The interview protocols were developed following phase one. Interviews with vice-principals and teachers were useful for triangulation of data obtained from school sources and helped to increase validity (Creswell, 2009). The protocols were distinct for teachers and vice-principals but focused on the same constructs as the principals' protocols. (Interview protocols can be found in the Appendix A) Topics of interest examined in the study included: leadership practices and processes, development of equity and excellence; understanding of diversity, instructional leadership, horizontal interaction/collaboration within school (teaming, collaboration), social harmony and coexistence with different groups, outside of school (principals networks, interaction with other schools and other programmes), leadership development (in-service, out-service), influences of community context, impacts of change. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. I also took some notes during interviews, where helpful, in order to check whether questions have been answered and to capture and highlight major points that required more probing as the interviews progressed.

**TABLE 3.6: Interview Rounds for Athena**

<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>	<b>Round 4</b>	<b>Round 5</b>
October 6	October 10	October 14	October 15	October 17
<i>Participants and Interview Duration (mins)</i>				
Principal (97)	Principal (75)	Principal (116)	Principal (95)	Principal (105)
Vice-principal (62)	Vice-principal (120)	Teacher (98)	Teacher (103)	

**TABLE 3.7: Interview Rounds for Ares**

<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>	<b>Round 4</b>	<b>Round 5</b>
October 20	October 22	October 27	October 31	November 3
<i>Participants and Interview Duration (mins)</i>				
Principal (125)	Principal (65)	Principal (77)	Principal (82)	Principal (111)
Vice-principal (119)	Teacher (104)	Vice-principal (102)	Teacher (120)	

**TABLE 3.8: Interview Rounds for Leander**

<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>	<b>Round 4</b>	<b>Round 5</b>
November 5	November 10	November 11	November 17	November 19
<i>Participants and Interview Duration (mins)</i>				
Principal (106)	Principal (80)	Principal (118)	Principal (90)	Principal (120)
Vice-principal (62)	Teacher (87)	Teacher (120)	Vice-principal (115)	

**TABLE 3.9: Interview Rounds for Nestor**

<b>Round 1</b>	<b>Round 2</b>	<b>Round 3</b>	<b>Round 4</b>	<b>Round 5</b>
November 24	November 26	December 2	December 10	December 12
<i>Participants and Interview Duration (mins)</i>				
Principal (120)	Principal (110)	Principal (60)	Principal (79)	Principal (117)
Teacher (102)	Vice-principal (86)	Teacher (80)	Vice-principal (120)	

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Some preliminary findings were used at the follow-up interviews and invited participant feedback. Thus, follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify and complete data collection. This kind of feedback also served as member checks – a suggested data verification technique in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998).

Data collection continued until sufficient material was obtained for saturation of relevant ideas. The meetings with the principals evolved into substantive conversations that yielded additional data. Transcripts of interviews can be found in Appendix C.

### **3.5.4 Observations**

The successive waves of field visiting allowed me to carry out observational work to assess key processes within the school that revealed the exercise of leadership in action. Observational work was limited to events in which leadership was likely to be exercised when these coincided with the timing of field visits. I focused my collection on various settings including formal meetings such as staff faculty meetings, and grade level meetings as well as less formal settings in which stakeholders engaged in discussions about instructions such as during lunch, preparation periods, and before and after school. I also observed classroom teaching, mainly to yield data on the nature of the learning challenges targeted by the school and the response of teaching staff to instructional leadership initiatives. Each observation lasted for 30 to 45 minutes from October through December. Observations were recorded as field notes in a detailed narrative form. The field notes identified the observable behaviours of the participants engaged in leadership practices. Data collection focused on both principals' and teachers' participation in the above meetings and informal interactions. In my observation notes, I included informal conversations between teachers and principals. See Table 10 for a descriptive summary of the observational data.

A protocol was designed to guide the observations (see Table 11). For each

observation I tried to debrief with the principal and get his/her views about what he/she was doing. I also tried to accomplish what the context was, and what he/she views as the outcome of the interactions. Since wandering around with a notebook and pencil in hand and scribbling notes down on a continuous basis runs the risk of making people self-conscious, I took small amounts of notes out of the setting and at the end of each observation.

**TABLE 3.10: Summary of Observational Data**

	<b>Athena</b>	<b>Ares</b>	<b>Leander</b>	<b>Nestor</b>
<b>Formal meetings</b>				
Staff faculty meetings	3	2	3	4
Grade level meetings	2	3	2	2
<b>Informal interactions</b>				
Observations of lunchtime, preparation periods, and before/after school	10	12	8	9
<b>Classroom visits</b>	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	17	19	15	68

I also visited two classrooms per school for 30 minutes each. The classrooms observed were chosen randomly. Within the classrooms I looked at the questions identified in Table 12. Table 13 provides a matrix of the frequency of use of methodological tools according to each school.

**Table 3.11: Observation Protocol**

<b>Questions</b>
How does s/he interact with staff or parents? (Affective style: warm, affectionate, directive, commanding, how much listening, how much speaking?)
How does s/he lead instruction? Is instruction differentiated to address students' special needs, while challenging all students? Are authentic student assessments used in assessing achievement?
Describe his/her community outreach. Community outreach programmes involve regularly eliciting perspectives of community constituencies and stakeholder groups, including parents.
What is the focus of his/her concerns/interactions? What is s/he striving to accomplish in the interactions?
How effective is s/he in conflict management? How is it recognised and addressed?
To what extent does s/he seem to accomplish these goals?

**TABLE 3.12: Classroom Visits**

<b>Questions</b>
What kinds of work are students engaged in? (In addition look at what is in folders, notebooks, or portfolios in the room).
What kind of teaching and learning do you see? (lecture, discussion, independent seat work, small-group work, writing, problem solving) Are all students engaged? (If not, which ones are engaged and which are not?) Is the work intellectually challenging?
What is the climate in the room? (calm, respectful, purposeful, happy, engaged, disorderly, disengaged, conflict-ridden)? How do students interact with one another and the teacher?
How does the teacher work with the whole class and with different students? (Describe teacher explanations/lecture; questioning/discussion techniques; and individualisation with particular students, if that occurs.)
What evidence can you see of student accomplishments or difficulties in learning?

The table below describes the frequency of the various methodological tools used for the purposes of this study according to each school.

**TABLE 3.13: Matrix of the Frequency of Use of Methodological Tools According to Each School**

School	Athena	Ares	Leander	Nestor	Totals
Principal interviews	5	5	5	5	20
Vice-principal interviews	2	2	2	2	8
Teacher interviews	2	2	2	2	8
Principal questionnaire	1	1	1	1	4
Teacher questionnaire	1	1	1	1	4
Observations	17	19	15	17	20
Surveys (principal, vice principal and teacher)	3	3	3	3	12
Totals	31	33	29	31	230

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The interaction between data analysis and data collection allowed me to clarify and strengthen my understanding of educators' ideas through searching for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Data from each case was first analysed separately to give a complete picture of leadership practices in the diverse schools of Cyprus. Individual case analysis was conducted, by systematically combining the multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data from interviews, observations and surveys. Triangulation among multiple sources of



evidence provided greater depth and accuracy by allowing me to draw upon different perspectives (Yin, 2009). Original interview and observation transcripts were analysed using the type of data analysis used in phase one above, to identify themes and understandings of leadership and diversity within the narratives of leadership work, and how these understandings helped participants to move the work forward. I used this process to develop and support concepts that then developed into substantive themes within each school site. Triangulation methodology was actively utilised to enhance the validity and reliability of data (Yin, 2009). The same data analysis framework was used for each case. Although the same translation and data analysis strategies were used as in phase one, below I summarise the key strategies and how I used the additional data sources.

### **3.6.1 Data Analysis Strategies**

After conducting interviews and field observations, I had the data transcribed, added field notes and had all these translated. To identify convergence in the data (Patton, 1990), all interview transcripts, field notes and documents were coded together. As in phase one, my procedures involved different stages of data analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994), with an additional stage added for the purposes of phase two. I used an open coding procedure to categorise and reduce the data. I went line by line through the materials assigning codes to the data. In instances where the data did not fit the coding scheme or where there appeared to be contradictions, I tried to find other instances in the data that would resolve the issue. I then proceeded along more analytical lines by recoding; combining codes; and, most important, writing summaries of the codes and providing rationales for assigning, combining and creating new codes. Table 14 provides general definitions of each coding node. The most important feature of the process was an explanatory scheme that related codes to each other and their relationship to the emerging explanation. The inductive nature of the analysis led to the next stage of the analysis, an emerging narrative that explained the process of leadership practices for each school. Through this inductive and recursive

procedure, I produced a narrative that described leadership experience.

The next step in data analysis involved making an interpretation or meaning of the data. This is the stage where I tried to go beyond the codes, categories and data bits and get to what the 'whole' is or may be (Dey, 1993). Meaning was derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature or theories.

A direct comparison and contrast was made between the themes identified from the qualitative interviews with the quantitative survey responses. This approach is consistent with recommendations by Creswell (2003) for triangulation, when quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously. The thematic information obtained from the qualitative data was compared with results from the quantitative survey. In other words the emerging qualitative codes were compared with items from existing instruments. For each case I compared the chunks of text attached to my set of qualitative codes with the 52 items from the quantitative instruments, searching for items matching the coded text and noting which instrument items were reflected in the qualitative. This comparative process became a means for integrating the qualitative and quantitative findings in the presentation of study results.

By directly comparing and contrasting emerging codes and instruments I found considerable overlap between the leadership practices that emerged from the qualitative analysis and quantitative instruments. Consistent with the triangulation purpose in case study research (Yin, 2009), the survey data provided confirmatory evidence of leadership practices. Inconsistency between quantitative and qualitative findings was solved through further data collection and data analysis.

Further data collection was carried out in February 2009. In particular follow-up interviews were used to clarify issues identified during data analysis. Some of the issues included participants' orientations towards diversity, leadership constraints

**TABLE 14: Coding Categories and Definitions for Coding Categories**

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**CODES DEFINITION**

**Collective Leadership**

Many school participants, rather than just the principal, were involved in leadership activity. School participants engage together in efforts to produce collective achievements through concerted work. This allows the potential leadership group to develop initiative from across the school to be adopted, adapted and improved by others.

**Self-Awareness**

The principal has strong self-knowledge, awareness of limitations as well as strengths. Can put self in others' shoes, and analyse their perspective, respect for individuality. Can hold own ego in check while making gestures that address others' emotional reactions. Is willing to invest in activities that build emotional bonds.

**Values Driven**

School faculty cares about values and ethics, about the impact of diversity on school. Believes in the transformative power of service in common good. Build enduring institutions infused with values and meaning beyond particular tasks.

### **Allows Differences to Surface**

School faculty emphasises differences. School faculty provide opportunities for students to express their individuality. Expression of identities was reinforced through various events that made students feel comfortable being different.

### **Awareness of Others**

Skilful interaction across different student groups. School faculty learned to see things from the perspective of others.

### **Respect for Differences**

The school celebrates achievement and diversity. School faculty shows awareness and sensitivity to the variables of diversity within school communities

### **Institutional Continuous Learning**

The processes and activities designed to increase the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators. A key element is that teachers are learners and are supported by principals as they increase their professional knowledge.

### **Communication**

The principal provided opportunities for open dialogue between people or groups. This theme focuses on the availability of stakeholders to talk to other stakeholders.

### **Hierarchical/Bureaucratic**

Emphasis on command and control working relationships. Operate in a top-down fashion work context.

### **School Culture**

This is the atmosphere in the school. A positive school culture focuses on the friendliness of the staff and gives sense of being welcome, has an attitude that learning is a goal, and has focus on student achievement.

### **Team Building**

Willingness to work in teams and in cooperation with others. Emphasis on collective effort and cooperation.

### **Community Outreach**

This refers to the contributions made by the community to the school and the degree to which school personnel reach out into the community. These community connections exist beyond formalised educational settings.

### **Acting Politically**

People used the limits of their own authority and of diverse groups' interests to forge alliances.

how leaders create opportunities for successful collaboration, how leaders create opportunities for successful collaboration, how identity is used to bridge differences, and how they convey respect and affection towards diverse others.

### **3.6.2 Cross-Case Analysis**

My analyses of the larger data set yielded my focus on leadership and leadership development in diverse contexts and the effect on principal's role in trying to develop equity and excellence. Once each single case was analysed thoroughly, cross-case techniques commenced. The aim of cross-case analysis was to distinguish the processes and outcomes across many cases and to expand the understanding of similarities and differences across cases (Yin, 2009). Further, multi-comparisons highlight the particular conditions and generic processes required for explaining how situations are related (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Various steps have been taken for cross-case analysis. Having developed detailed case descriptions and coded the data, I constructed an array or display of the data. A display is a visual format that presents information systematically so that the user can draw valid conclusions. The displays used for the purpose of cross-case analysis consisted of simple arrays and critical incident charts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The overall idea was to become intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity, and to allow the unique patterns of each case to emerge before seeking to generalise across cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). This in turn gave me the depth of understanding that is needed for cross-case analysis. I then selected pairs of cases and started to look for similarities and differences, including subtle ones.

By analysing specific actions across schools, several practice-informing themes emerged (Merriam, 1998). Thus, the comparison across the four schools was made to determine where similarities and differences existed and to identify a number of best practices (Yin, 2009). The systematic search for cross-case patterns is a key step in case research. It is also essential for enhancing the generalisability of conclusions drawn from cases.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

This study followed the ethical approval by the Institute of Education prior to the collection of any data. Access and acceptance to the schools where the research was conducted was also obtained from the MOEC in Cyprus. The appropriate official was contacted in a letter which included an outline of the research project along with the possible benefits of the research.

Informed consent was obtained from both principals and teachers in all schools prior to data collection. All participants were given a written explanatory statement regarding the study. The statement provided information about the purpose and method of the study, the nature of their involvement in the research, the duration of their participation, the fact that participation was voluntary, and that they were free to withdraw at any time. Participants were also told that the results would be used for the purpose of writing a thesis and that the results would be published. The participants were also asked for permission to tape-record the interviews. All of the participants gave me permission to share their stories. Consent was given in writing. The participants were also told that at the end of the study they would be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the study.

The anonymity and privacy of those who participated in the research were also respected. Personal information concerning the research participants was kept confidential. The data were handled confidentially by removing all names on the transcripts (including names of schools and communities). To offer protection to the identification of the participants, interviewees were given pseudonyms. Names and other identifiable materials were also removed from the transcripts. Sometimes it was necessary to decide whether it was proper or appropriate to record certain kinds of sensitive information.

Respondents completed a questionnaire that bears absolutely no identification. The participants were informed that only the researcher could trace the data back

to the participant, that the information would only be retained until the research was completed, that the data would be deleted or destroyed afterwards and that the participant would have access to the information at any time.

### **3.8 Summary**

Chapter 3 first presented my justification for using case studies. I then described the relevance of qualitative research methods in the study of leadership research but also the secondary role of quantitative research. The two phases of field-based data collection were then described. The first included a preliminary, exploratory phase that assisted in developing the two research questions guiding this research. The focused phase explored four schools using both qualitative and quantitative methods, with the first being the dominant. Techniques used for within-case and cross-case analysis were then presented.

The key issues emerging from the cases collectively are the subject of Chapters 5 and 6. The following section offers narrative case studies of each school. Each case study begins with a short descriptive account of life at one school and concludes with an analysis of several factors identified by principals, vice-principals and teachers as most responsible for the school's success and process in leading equity and excellence. The next chapter presents the narratives of the four schools.



## **CHAPTER**

### **4**

## **The Four Schools**

This chapter offers narrative case studies of each school. Each school begins with a short descriptive account of life at one school and concludes with an analysis of several factors identified by principals, vice-principals and teachers as most responsible for the school's success and process in leading equity and excellence.

### **4.1 School Athena**

One considerable feat in the otherwise challenging news that Cyprus's schools are now packed with diversity and cultures was Athena's success, which exceeded leaders' expectations. The transformation of the school started in 2000, when Marcos, the school principal, arrived with high ambitions for the school, only to be transferred two years later to another school. His transfer brought with it the end of the transformation and his leaving had a negative effect on the school, until the governors from the MOEC asked for his urgent re-transfer to the school while he was on holiday in Greece.

Despite its diverse school composition, the school sits successfully in a rather isolated neighbourhood, it is driven by a culture of values, and it celebrates innovation and success. During the last few years in which the school's racial composition changed, with leaders complaining and expressing their inability to deal with culture-related pressing issues, School Athena has managed to bring the attention and publicity to celebrate its success.

The school was culturally and linguistically diverse and serves students from homes of low socio-economic status. The student enrolment was 18% Greek Cypriots and 82% minority students. From the 82% of minority students, 70% came from Georgia, 7% from Russia, 3% from Romania, 1% from Egypt, 1% from Bulgaria, 1% from Moldavia, 1% from Turkey, 1% from the Philippines, 1% from South Africa, and 14% from other countries. These students came from homes where a language other than Greek was spoken. The school offered Greek language courses for students not deemed proficient in Greek. The majority came from low-income homes and all students receive free nutrition services.

Marcos came to the school ready to take on the challenge of Athena. Converting the school into a multicultural one was a formidable test as the school experienced severe challenges of persistent poverty. Marcos looked at his own main concerns, and he looked at teaching and learning as well as his school's political, economic and social climate. He saw a way to combine these. Athena could be differentiated by basing its strategy on values of social responsibility. Today, Athena is an unusual success story: it has managed to combine unique elements to improve everyone's learning.

### **4.1.1 Starting with Values**

During the first few difficult months the principal spent some time clarifying and reaffirming his values. As Marcos noted:

It is important to understand what you deeply believe because people won't pay attention to you otherwise...the school faces daily challenges, therefore we need strong beliefs that guide and tell us where we stand. To be able to lead in this school you must know who you are, especially in this school, where you have to think deeper about why you make certain kinds of choices and decisions.

Marcos had integrity because integrity to lead often requires consistency in words and deeds. Marcos also knew what he stood for, what he believed in, and

what he cared most about. In fact his values really did matter to carry the school forward. Although the principal had a strong personality, what made him different was his personal values which seemed to be well embedded throughout the organisation. Values also affected the strategic choices that educators made for the school. As the principal noted:

Upon arrival of new teachers they become immunised with the beliefs of the school. We make lots of discussions to open minds. The values of the school give us ground to work on. They are very important to that process.

His values had a strong influence on the particular shape the school took and the directions it followed. Purpose and values have helped the school meet challenging demands. At Athena, a belief in the purpose generated self-guidance, and peer responsibility helped keep one another aligned with the core set of principles. These findings are consistent with Bass and Avolio (2000) who assert that mentioning the values is an effective process to keep a sense of a higher purpose. When asked whether he felt people used values consistently he noted: 'Teachers engage in diversity through discussions and debates between them. They talk about values regularly.'

Teachers also noted that principles and values motivate the school to respond quickly to problems and ensure consistency of actions. In return parents and students alike put tremendous trust in the school's ambition to do what is best for students. It seems that values were therefore central in every day activities, long-term goals and potential targets at the present school. As the teacher and assistant principal put it:

Everyone is made out of the same philosophy and therefore every decision is based on the philosophy of the school (Teacher).

The fact that we all share the same philosophy helps us understand the way we should behave and collaborate (Assistant Principal).

But to turn the idea of values at the heart of school strategy, as the two educators put it, the kind of values and principles had to be clear. Similarly Deal and Peterson (2009) note that culture change comes only when everyone in the system understands and embraces values. At Athena before moving to strategy educators examined their values before associating themselves with mission and goals. The principal in particular was clear about where he wanted his school to go. His school had two main goals: improving teaching and learning, and creating safe spaces where students can learn. The school also seemed to have found better ways of managing children's backgrounds and family situations than others. For him, language expression was the most significant factor to the survival of education of these students. In his own words:

we make everything possible for these students to express themselves...When you have a hole filled up with weed, you have to clean up the weed for the water to run. Thus children cannot learn unless we take all that pressure which disengages them from learning.

The school did not only have clear values but they were also able to go beyond those values listed on paper by using them as a strategic guidance system. As Marcos noted:

It is not our strategy that is important. Our strategy stems from the fact that we all share the same philosophies, ideas and values. If a school copies what we do [the strategy] they will not succeed if they don't believe that all students can learn [values].

The clear sense of purpose of Marcos and the rest of the school had provided a road full of activities. Marcos viewed clear core values as an important element of future processes. According to Marcos:

the real needs of the students are identified at the end and beginning of each academic year. The goals of the school are informed by the real needs of the students; prepackaged goals are not allowed to determine the range of wants or demands that students accept. In other words the vision is not a product of the MOEC.

Thus, in Athena, at the end of each academic year, the school used to hold long meetings reviewing school data, examining student work, identifying areas of need, adding time or new materials to the curriculum and finally drafting new goals and missions to set the focus for the coming year. At the end of the summer, when the MOEC's school goals came in, the goal map was re-worked to reflect where students had difficulties so that the new academic year had a greater opportunity of success.

Everyone in the school shared his aspirations for improved student achievement and worked together as a team in finding a concerted, focused, and well-led programme to overcome the confluence of external forces, mainly of social, economic and psychological factors. Marcos constantly worked to make the process of shaping strategy as open and transparent as possible. His goals were not engraved in the minds of teachers, but they were externalised and made more explicit. Since teachers were involved in the making of goals, they felt more able to apply shared views. At Athena leaders at all levels of the school not only understood where the school was going, but were excited by it, remembered it, and knew what to do to make it happen in their day-to-day decisions. For the strategy to take hold, leaders also believed in the values inherent in it. There was an emotional connection at a very personal level. This was achieved by setting challenging strategic goals. This can be seen from Marcos's simple, emotional statement: 'The greatest satisfaction for all of us here is when our students come to visit the school before going to university'. As Athena's strategy focused on the future and was seen as something challenging, it inspired teachers to achieve. At Athena Marcos wanted his teachers to have pride in Athena as an organisation, not merely to be following the dictates or instructions of a leader.

He wanted teachers to connect in a way that is relevant to them. A teacher in the same school concurred:

When you are working for the same school for so many years, you need to be proud of it. The school has values that we really believe in. This is the reason I'm here, because I really believe in this school.

#### **4.1.2 Questioning Social Order**

Previous research suggests that educators tend to regard the existing social order and dominant ideology uncritically and, often, unconsciously (Friere, 1998; Sleeter, 1992). Unfortunately, reproduction of dominant ideology and lack of political clarity often translates into uncritical acceptance of the status quo as natural, and of assimilationist and deficit-based views of minority students (Bartolome, 2002). Such discriminatory processes inside and outside schools make it harder for minority groups to move forward in the mainstream society. In contrast with this piece of research the principal was critical about the legitimacy of the dominant social order, which creates unequal power relations among minority groups. For instance, the principal noted:

That our society is unprepared to accept multiculturalism...The problem is that our society thinks that everybody is white, middle class, and speaks one language, middle class, but not everybody is like us.

Marcos critiqued and raised concern about the injustice and discrimination of education systems that legitimate the privileged status and wealth of the dominant highly skilled and educated society. Young (2004), like many other social and educational theorists who came after him, was troubled by the education-based differentiation that remains at the heart of meritocracy as a political and moral ideal, and the inequality of a system in which the 'best and brightest' are enabled to rise to the top while the rest can be legitimately left to fall off behind. Similarly, Marcos did not believe in a merit system when racism was such a reality in the lives of children. The principal also admitted that

changing the racist lenses of some of his teachers was not an easy task. By taking a more comprehensive view of the social order and its potential negative manifestation at the school level, he took action strategically to assist his students in school. He noted that:

Some teachers don't try as hard as others with some students compared to the rest. They blame their home background and their lack of 'education-culture' and as a result you will hardly see them leaning on their desks...I have to confront them and prove them how wrong they are.

One teacher proved that these types of teachers are indeed wrong. As she notes:

all students could meet standards, but those who were farthest behind needed more time and more support to reach them quickly...the brain is the same, either [the student] is Cypriot or not. They just need more help due to the language barriers.

At the school level, the teacher noted the often-quiet insults some students coming from the former Soviet Union had to go through in her class before accidentally realising what was going on. Whereas several researchers noted a 'culture of blame' taking place in schools, at Athena the principal showed understanding of the disadvantages minorities experience in an unjust and unfair system. He explains that:

When [minorities] go to shop from the shop next door the shop manager refuses to sell them goods and he excuses his behaviour by claiming that he doesn't like that particular group of people.

The principal's recognition of the system's unfairness and lack of social support did not allow him to say that students have historically underachieved or parents don't care about their children's education. He further noted that if they leave untreated the children's negative, racist and classist ideological orientations that

they bring from home to the school, inequities may increase further. It seems that explanations for such inequalities are well developed and ongoing. Although Marcos fervently believed that student's racial and socio-economic status need not predict his or her academic destiny, arriving at the school he tried changing his behaviour:

I was prepared to accept the students emotionally and psychologically. I did not try so much changing my behaviour as my attitude towards various situations in relation to cultural diverse students...by getting more into their own shoes.

Empathy enabled Marcos to see members of other groups as human individuals who can be trusted and have legitimate needs and goals and with whom one would want to maintain peaceful relations. Thus, empathy seemed to direct the principal's attention to the needs and suffering of others and to changing delegitimising practices.

Marcos has also learned to experience problems that their students might be facing. He learned to see himself through their eyes and experience first hand what they experience. He was good at reading cues that tell him how to adjust his style, to make interactions smooth, and produce the outcomes he desires. By being able to put himself in the shoes of others, he became able to reason and analyse his actions. In other words, he saw people as individuals while learning what it is like for other people with a different life experience. This enabled him to see his actions from the points of view of others and after analysing a particular situation, plan and adjust future strategies accordingly. The principal was slowly starting to see things from the perspectives of others.

Another belief common to the educators of this school was their refusal to blindly accept dominant white culture as superior or highly desirable for their students. The principal pointed out that: 'every culture has something to give'.



The principal and the rest of the teachers also emphasised socio-economic class in their arguments against deficit perspectives of culturally diverse students:

Not only cultural diverse people do not have the same opportunities as us, they work more than us...because they are economic migrants, they don't come here because they love us, they don't come here for holidays...they are economic migrants.

The teacher reported how difficult it was for her growing up as a working-class girl and attending a private school. She learned at an early age that her lower socio-economic status made her feel discomfort and socially less valuable than her peers despite her strong intellectual abilities. The teacher also reported how difficult it is for these children watching affluent middle to upper class students 'living in luxury'. She also attributed her early cultural experiences to attending the particular private school with a large number of diverse students.

I learned about different cultures early on. I had Armenian friends, English Cypriots, and Swedish. I did not think it was unusual to have such friends not even for a single moment. My parents also had foreign people at home and in my family business so basically I lived with foreigners from an early age.

In contrast to the teacher's focus on socio-economic class, the vice principal discussed issues of ethnicity and racism:

Diverse students aren't inferior...all children can learn regardless of ethnicity...however these children are mistreated at home and their background is definitely disadvantaged.

Educational research has not focused on isolated children, but homes, stores, and parks animate and constrain their lives. Marcos analytically focused on the school neighbourhood: 'Students have developed characteristics of ghetto. This is because they are isolated, they don't have any kind of contact with Cypriots.'

Marcos also identified the ghetto label as being harmful to students. He considered the 'isolation' or 'ghetto' and looking in and out competing neighbourhoods as a disadvantage. Examining the local production of risk in a neighbourhood requires both a deep description of people's engagements with each other and expansive accounts of the political and economic forces beyond the line of sight or insight available to most participants. Despite neighbourhood complexities, Athena was not only physically safe, offering students shelter from the violence that characterised their poor community, but the school was also psychologically safe, sheltering them from the risks that come from being minority and mostly poor. Educators kept the school open all day and many nights, connecting students to mentors. They were convinced that their hard work could open a path for every student, and they refused to sort students into success and failure piles.

### 4.1.3 High-Quality Education

The principal knew from the start that a country's official curriculum has substantial impact on what really takes place in the classroom. 'As he noted: when I first came here, the school and the curriculum especially had to become multicultural.' As a political leader he negotiated with parents and the MOEC to get approval for programmes and resources. Thus, 'the school had a quiet agreement with the Ministry to change curriculum aims without missing certain material'. In contrast to the principal who realised the needs of the school early, teachers arrived in Athena having the following set of beliefs:

Teachers outside the school feel that [Athena] isn't a great school to teach because it is such a low-status school and nobody cares who learns anything or not...there were teachers who did not want to work here...but in the end we came, we loved it, and we don't want to leave. (Teacher)

Prior to our arrival in this school, we hear things like 'parents don't care there and therefore don't complain', 'as long as you do your job you will be fine', 'nobody pays much attention'. (Assistant Principal)

Teachers who worked outside Athena often held a stereotypical view of the school like every other school with a subordinate student population and blamed students' low achievement on family background and poverty. As they were not optimistic about the school's ability to overcome those demographics, they did not wish to teach in such schools. This was not the case for the teacher being interviewed. The first striking impression of the teacher in the first few weeks was that Athena's students were, for the most part, well behaved. They obeyed the rules and spoke respectfully to their teachers and each other. She also noted that even when she asked her class not to call her 'Mrs' (which according to the teacher is 'a word that is hardly mentioned in other non-diverse schools) they kept calling her 'Mrs', showing how valuable the teacher was to them. The second thing that she realised she needed to change was her teaching methods:

I worked hard to adapt my practice to whoever was in the class, and I was constantly searching for resources that helped me respond adequately to their needs...I use formative assessments to monitor student progress and then I modify my approaches based on what I see in the data.

Apart from individual work there was also a strong culture among teachers of sharing data and discovering new ways to analyse and display it. As the principal noted: 'Our biggest pleasure is seeing differences in students' achievement'. Data were the key to changing the culture of expectations in the school. Teachers looked at the data and talked as a team about what worked well.

After successful curriculum arrangements, the school team began by considering the barriers that may prevent them from succeeding and later concentrated on the identification of caring behaviours and community building with students. At Athena educators did not blame students or background for their unacceptable

behaviour, rather they created conditions to engage students in how to negotiate their actions appropriately. They thought they were informed of students' economic conditions until one of the teachers asked her students to go and talk to her about anything that bothers them with the promise that she wouldn't tell anyone. The teacher showed a personal interest in the student's well-being inside and outside the classroom by asking her students to communicate with her when something distracts them from their learning. In a similar vein, Pang (2005) notes that 'when teachers care for students, they want to know about their experiences and backgrounds' (p. 219). Their conviction and commitment is to care about them as human beings through relationship building. At Athena, strong interpersonal relationships were thought to be at the heart of the multicultural classroom. Similarly, Freire (1997) insists on the fact that the quality of a teacher comes from his/her ability to listen to the learner, in that 'he or she who listens to the learner attentively and in a critical manner is able to speak with the learner, even if occasionally he/she needs to speak at the learner' (pp. 127–128).

At Athena, caring also involved teachers' pedagogical behaviours in the classroom. Teachers provided students with the support they needed to facilitate success and encourage self-esteem. On one occasion, the teacher was constantly asking students whether they understood the lesson and she was going around tables providing further assistance. The teacher later noted that 'students want to believe that you are genuinely interested in their success'. Checking students' understanding during teaching time and providing assistance with academic learning tasks are consistent with previous research. Noddings (2005) believes that caring is a pedagogical virtue demonstrated by forcing students to achieve the skills and acquire the knowledge that has been prescribed for them. From this view, a teacher exercises the virtue of caring by making students do what is thought to be good for them (p. xiv). Students did not have fall through the cracks to get needed assistance. Support was proactive and built into the central organisation of the school. As the assistant principal noted, 'when students are seeing misbehaving there's an expectation that teachers will look after them and support them'.

The only hallmark of the school was that students were taught a less rigorous curriculum. Although the school can, at least to some extent, decide on a set of curricular aims for their students, according to the assistant principal, those who get most affected are the Cypriot students who miss important grammatical material:

Cypriot students are missing important grammatical facts because the presence of such a large number of minority students does not allow us to teach difficult curriculum material. I think Cypriot students in regards to learning they are better off in other schools and diverse students are better off here. The MOEC should prioritise the most important curricular aims so that we know what we teach.

The teacher commented on the impact of predominantly minority school's intergroup relations, noting that students are better off at Athena because students in other schools may experience isolation.

in other schools where diverse students are the minority, students are isolated and this is the main reason for anti-social behaviours being observed more often in these schools...

One striking observation was the presence of a small number of students at the office of the school principal. When the principal was asked why this was the case, he noted that these children were thrown out from previous schools and sent to Athena to 'save them'. Because the transition was not always easy, teachers felt free to send them to his office when they are misbehaving. The principal would either pre-occupy them with academic work or open his drawer to pick up small exercises or games to give to students if he is busy with something else at the time when the student arrives at his office. When Marcos was asked about the frequency of these incidents he said:

There are some kids sent to us from other schools, quite frequently I would say, because they are so problematic that no one knows how to handle it. The boy that you saw earlier was sent to us a month ago. He had various problems but he has shown some remarkable improvements here from the first few days. He seems more calm and willing to listen to us.

The principal did not accept misbehaving students to the office at the first sign of trouble but he was willing to spend time with difficult students until they had adjusted to the school's new environment.

Although teachers offered students a variety of support to help students negotiate the demands of language proficiency and curriculum, the school had not sought to marry these with high standards and challenging curriculum. The principal thought that access to an overloaded curriculum would not automatically translate into student success. The standards were indeed low for a Cypriot student as the principal's aim was to teach students to speak, read and write. Despite standards, the school had teachers who were working together to help students learn through caring behaviours and development of programmes. The students in turn perceived these additional learning opportunities as privileges rather as punishments. A punishment would be giving students an overloaded curriculum.

The principal advocated that use of technology in classrooms was essential. Thus he worked at the intersection of multicultural education and instructional technology and believed that understanding words and meaning requires technology-embedded activities. In his own words:

Effective learning in a multicultural setting depends on visual supports such as pictures through boards which help the teacher can make content understandable to the learner and enrich what is being said.

This finding is in contrast with Valadez and Duran (2007) who studied an economically diverse cross-section of schools and found that although teachers in high-poverty schools tended to use these technologies more for record keeping and administrative tasks, those in low poverty schools were more likely to use them for creating instructional materials and strengthening instructional practices. However, the principal noted that the school has inequitable access to such resources and support to use these technologies in pedagogically sound ways. Marcos also complained about the lack of training in the use of such boards. He stressed the need for teachers working with a high number of minority students to be more likely to know how to use the boards. Their potential contribution and use next to curriculum was of paramount importance; however, such practices were innovative only for the schools that have access to them.

Although the school has made progress on teaching and learning matters, the principal believed that the school was not earning the necessary public recognition it deserved. As he noted: 'In other schools such as Lapithos you get lots of publicity if you do something great. Here we are doing miracles and nobody gets to know about it.'

### **4.1.4 Professional Learning and Leadership**

It is the work that leaders do that enables teachers to be effective – it makes teachers able to use what they know in a high-functioning school environment that produces student success. As the teacher noted: 'A good reason that makes me want to stay in this school is the quality of support from the part of the principal'. At Athena the principal conducted regular 'walk-throughs' of classrooms to monitor the quality, consistency and intensity of the teaching. In particular he noted that 'high-quality teaching is the key to success and our biggest issue is having incompetent teachers placed in these schools'. The variation in teaching quality across classrooms at Athena did not stop Marcos from opening up his practice, questions and ideas and discussing them with

teachers.

Teachers can learn more about teaching when they work together rather than trying to do it alone...I also don't want teachers to feel that they are threatened. I find ways to make them feel that they are not being judged or evaluated. They know that if they need something, I will try and get it for them.

In fact, many researchers have identified the collaboration associated with professional community of teachers as a key element of successful schools (Hammersley-Fletcher and Bundrett, 2008; James et al., 2007). Similarly, at Athena Marcos managed to build a collegial professional environment for teachers to generate collective responsibility for student learning and school improvement. He went on to explain how collaboration within teacher teams strengthens teaching and accountability:

Teachers have to collaborate if they want to survive. The demands are such that conversations are necessary to solve problems and take off the burdens and concerns out of their heads. Everyone holds each other accountable for meeting the school goals. They plan together, discuss about kids together and they support each other. It would be great to have more time for an experienced teacher to observe a less experienced one.

At Athena, teachers used their professional learning time to collaborate, design curriculum, and learn from one another. Observations showed that teachers were more likely to be found looking at student learning evidence, planning and organising instruction, and student support. Although the school does not allocate adequate shared professional learning time, collaboration and collective practice was exercised every day. Professional learning meetings were informal, deep and honest, in contrast to planned ones. Although novice teachers were experiencing a feeling of discomfort, professional learning environments were well put in place that enabled them to learn and develop. They viewed collaborative work as



central to their development. The principal also provided teachers with the necessary psychological safety and support required to discuss teaching challenges. When the teacher was asked how does the principal create this type of environment, the teacher said:

You need to cooperate with the principal; the problems are so many that you need him to solve problems and coordinate programmes. I can talk to him about everything. Teachers are not afraid that he is going to criticise or judge us. A few days ago I asked for his opinion on a personal matter. I respect his opinion and I know he will give you the kind of support you need.

Clearly, Marcos had a substantial influence on the quality of teaching at Athena, mainly, through trust. In building collaboration the principal ensured that trust was placed at the cultural heart of the school. In a similar vein, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that the growth of relational trust in schools 'fuels the multiple strands of the school change process and thereby contributes to improved student learning' (p. 121).

It was also found that Marcos spent considerable amounts of time on 'getting information', and in decision-making processes. The principal noted:

Teachers are part of decision-making processes and therefore everyone feels responsible for students. However, the principal is the spokesperson for the school, he represents the school and its expertise to the outside world and keeps outside stakeholders informed on its progress. Teachers don't see that. They see don't see the forest. They see it blurred.

Marcos believed that since interaction flows are an everyday activity for leaders, they are better informed about the problems of students than any teacher alone and therefore better able to decide on an appropriate course of action. Marcos in turn spent most of his time not necessarily processing information but actually

collecting and disseminating information for its own sake. The communicating role existed as a kind of membrane all around the leader through which all leadership activity passed. Marcos spent considerable amounts of time communicating – picking up all sorts of scraps of detail and at the same time telling teachers about broader issues.

Despite the good work in observing, providing psychological safety and disseminating information to teachers Marcos pointed out that the MOEC is not investing heavily in helping teachers gain the knowledge and skills they need to diagnose students' needs and adjusting teaching and learning in to help students meet standards. As he put it:

Teacher training is the reason for our most frequent fights with the MOEC. Teachers must possess the necessary knowledge and skills in teaching a diverse classroom.

According to Marcos quality teaching makes the difference and he strongly believed that the MOEC needs to provide the necessary training to support teaching and learning. He proposed a programme focused on developing teachers' capacities to recognise and respond to learning difference among students and with heavy emphasis on the impact of high expectations and quality instruction on student learning. What Marcos recommended is 'teachers [having] a programme, which provides intensive support for brand new teachers in the schools.' The principal also stressed the need of a mentoring programme to provide more intensive support for new teachers is also necessary. The principal also noted that:

Teachers should receive much of the training on site-rather than taking off a teacher's Friday afternoon to the Pedagogical Institute. Job-embedded professional development provided by staff development teachers located at each school site is the ideal. Trainers must be hired within the school

buildings and during work hours to ensure that all teachers could access the courses.

The contribution of such a programme would be to help teachers recognise the characteristics and importance of high-quality teaching and learning and its link to student outcomes. Moreover, Marcos also noted that he is uncomfortable in telling teachers and other staff that they aren't doing well, particularly if they are long-term employees. Thus, for the system to be successful Marcos believed that peer evaluation and review is necessary. He explained that the support of experienced consulting teachers who help their colleagues craft more-powerful instructional approaches and develop new teaching strategies helps build a workforce that speaks a common language, understand its goals, and is prepared to achieve success. Although Marcos was undertaking systematic walk-throughs into classrooms, offering feedback and guidance, he believed that a teacher evaluation system based on standard of effective practice was lacking. He suggested that:

New teachers that go into diverse schools could be observed some times during their first year by a consulting teacher and could be given advice about areas where they can improve the quality of their teaching. For a novice teacher, feeling alone in the classroom and unsure of his or her skills, such assistance can be invaluable.

Thus, flexibility in training was lacking. The principal suggested that integrating experiences, in this case on-site training, allows teachers to better synthesise and apply new skills and knowledge in their daily work.

### **4.1.5 Leadership Development**

Under the previous principalship, achievement had slipped and teachers had become demoralised. Teachers described the previous principal as rigid and controlling, causing them to feel fearful. As the teacher noted:

The school was in chaos. She used to shout to individual students in the corners. And apart from the fact that she created a bad climate, I could not stand on my feet to see what was happening around me. I was lost and as a result I learned nothing – not just from her but in general because of the way she made us feel. We were all very confused.

The teacher also talked about how the presence of Marcos at Athena had changed the way she works. In particular, she has learned in practice how to find alternative perspectives and creative solutions in difficult situations. There was a constant observational learning from the impressive and notable principal – Marcos – within the school that seemed to have a great impact on the work of teachers. Teachers were involved in a leadership role and learning how to lead through experiential learning. For example, teachers pointed out the principal's successful incidents and how they learned from him. In particular, the teacher explained:

The principal really showed us that all students can learn. He's got a lot of patience and he transmits that patience to us. Because he changed lots of things in the school we are motivated to change even more. If an unmotivated teacher comes to the school we try changing her stereotypical views in the way that he changed ours.

As it was noted earlier, leadership development for him meant helping people learn from their work rather than taking them away from their work to learn. Marcos credited his development from previous past experiences and especially from scouting. Marcos is a member of the Scouting Association in Cyprus and all these years he 'learned by doing and learned to work in teams'. He also said that he owes to scouting most of his leadership skills, for instance how to support others through feedback practices in the course of meeting responsibilities. These experiences seem to have shaped his sense of purpose and have influenced his practice as he has learned 'the importance of vocation and notion of personal relationships' All of these tools came into play in his current challenging assignment at Athena. He used what he had learned to structure professional

development among his staff.

For Marcos leadership development should occur in the context of ongoing work initiatives that are tied to strategic imperatives. When he was asked about his formal leadership development experience, he noted that his Masters acted as a catalyst to reflect his experiences, and gave some kind of assuring confidence and affirming understanding. In particular, he noted:

The impact of obtaining Masters has not been great as I did it a long time ago. However, this qualification has brought me into leadership issues quite quickly. It gave me reassurance on certain things, which I thought I knew but in reality I did not. Masters gives you depth through research but I think you learn more in practice.

Marcos also noted the lack of active problem-based learning that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection: He talked about the integration of theory and practice:

The programme was based mainly on theory. I have learned almost everything in practice. The theory was not really connected to what goes on in diverse schools...you don't really get to see what is happening inside the walls of these schools unless you are promoted. The programme does not provide visits in such school to see what really occurs and what it really takes to become an effective leader. You have no idea what is happening outside in the real world. The programme takes up all of your afternoons and are designed just to get you through.

Marcos also noted that the school has helped him manage with situations and problems that were non-existent in previous schools. In particular, the challenges associated with the work in diverse schools enabled him to develop skills which were cognitively overwhelming.

In less diverse schools experiences are more routine and less challenging. Here experiences are novel, assignments stretch you and as a result you discover things about yourself you have never felt or experienced before.

Marcos also noted that the key to the success of the schools was the selection of principals:

...who are not racists and have the energy, commitment and passion to work in such contexts. Rather than the MOEC passively selecting whoever they find on the list, the MOEC needs to ensure that the most capable are brought to work in these environments. To be honest, only incapable principals and teachers are sent in such schools to work. The MOEC should look for those who want to work for social change and equality. It is not the kind of school that you come do your job and leave.

According to Marcos, by sending the wrong people into this kind of school, educational change is unlikely to be achieved. The present findings suggest that MOEC could look for educators who have shown success in education, they are hard-working and show demonstration of commitment in working in these settings, such as the work of Marcos. His commitment to equity and his experiences and strengths helped the school and community to understand equity.

### **4.2 School Ares**

Christopher was a principal of a small but a rather challenging school. Early before his appointment, his family discouraged him from going to work at Ares owing to the presence of Turkish-Cypriots in the school. His wife became a refugee in the 1974 war invasion, and his children didn't want their dad to work in a setting with 'people who killed [their] grandma and grandad.' His political beliefs were equally strong, and the word 'rapprochement' meant absolutely nothing to him. Upon his arrival in the school, he realised that changing minds and hearts is equally important as transforming and innovating struggling schools. As a new appointed principal, it became his responsibility, in addition to being competent in his leadership role, to expand that role to include competence in understanding the impact of identified historical and social forces on his students. As he became more aware of his and other's differences he was more

able to help and educate others to minimise tensions and conflicts and maximise positive interactions. He became not only very self-aware but he adopted a clear moral centre, he was transparent, and he became a fair and balanced decision maker.

The school sat in a Turkish neighbourhood that, although it has changed since the 1974 invasion, is still thought of by Cypriots as dominated by foreigners including Turkish-Cypriots. These facts alone would be enough to explain academic failure in the eyes of many. And yet Ares has probably received the greatest media attention amongst all schools, owing to its great transformation. The last thing that these students wanted was to be a part of a forced assimilation plan where their language is ridiculed, their knowledge is rejected and suppressed, and all are ignored by the education system. A considerable number of children spoke Greek as a second language, and many showed up knowing no Greek at all. The second common language was Turkish, as the Turkish-Cypriot was the largest minority group. The school consisted of 41% Greek-Cypriots, 40% Turkish-Cypriots. From the 19% of minority students, 4% came from Bulgaria, 7% from Iran, 3% from Turkey, 1% from Syria, 1% from Greece, 1% from Moldavia, 1% from Turkey, 1% from the Philippines.

### **4.2.1 The Arrival and Social Purpose**

The arrival at the school was difficult. A few years ago Greek-Cypriot parents had frosty relationships with the school and agreed on collecting signatures to convince the school that Turkish-Cypriots had no place in the school. The school clearly wanted a dynamic leader committed to taking these actions well beyond current expectations. The principal did not try to cover up any of the problems that the school was facing. A significant 'behaviour' gap existed between Greek-Cypriot and their Turkish-Cypriot peers and the principal started from there. Students routinely ran through the hallways and fights were commonplace. Based on what he saw and its mismatch with what he believed were necessary conditions of a high performing school, Christopher decided that multiple

changes would have to be made. Classroom management became easily noticeable during his first weeks of observation as the principal. Many classrooms were as chaotic as the hallways, where students ran around corners at high speeds and fights broke out on a regular basis. There was a constant noise from students all over the school. Teachers were not only frustrated with the inconsistent behaviour expectations from students but too often they would come out of the classroom crying. The principal and a team of teachers worked long hours to develop clear expectation for behaviour across the school and a system of positive reinforcements.

Christopher believed that schools exist within a social, economic and political context. This became very clear to Christopher and it would be disingenuous to abdicate his responsibility to these very real outside forces in providing equitable education for all children. He was clear about the negative effects of racism and how the dominant society benefited from current practices. As he became clearer on the privileges he has as a white man in Cypriot society, he began an odyssey of self-discovery about himself as a cultural being. Since Christopher honestly reflected on who he was and who he wanted to be, he quickly created better leadership bandwidth to respond to conditions. He also re-examined the foundations of his cognitive dependencies on Eurocentric ideologies (Parekh, 2006), opening himself to a wide range of knowledge and perspectives drawn from diverse experiences and cultures. Thus, upon his arrival he critically examined his ideologies, principles and assumptions. The principal having identified his deeply held principles, he went through an articulation process of those principles, or even a development of new ones. As is indicated below, it doesn't take long for a culturally responsible leader to expand his repertoire of individual values and behaviours and his school's policies and practices to be inclusive of students' cultures in ways that facilitate learning:

When you come here and you are being hugged by Aishe and other minority students you become more human, you change who you are and you are thinking 'what is it to blame these children?' (Principal)



Therefore, arriving to the school Christopher realised that the first thing that needed to be changed was his values and behaviour in such a way that he could better influence all those around him. Social purpose was also indicated, as in a teacher's words:

I came to this school because I wanted to help some kids and in this way I was contributing to more just and peaceful community...I know that I have succeeded when I see students learn, defend their rights as well as other people's rights, when they cooperate during class and outside class, respect one another...

It is clear that the teacher thought herself as an activist. This was an exemplary teacher and this finding reflected the principal's assertions that not all teachers become aware and responsive to linguistic and cultural issues that students are facing, because they either experience resistance or they need help with minority students.

In addition, the teacher also believed in the power of extrinsic rewards and cooperation with parents. As she noted: 'I found the solution to all of my problems. Rewards really work well in this school. I spend most of my money at Jumbo<sup>1</sup>.' The teacher used a variety of resources in order to raise student performance, including her own money. Extrinsic rewards for students living in poverty can be a good thing and a bad thing. They can motivate students in the short term but what was really important was to maintain good relationships with families. For her, contribution to society unfolded through the relationships that teachers formed with students and their families.

When a teacher was asked what was one of the very first changes which occurred after Christopher's appointment to the school, he pointed out that before Christopher's arrival:

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<sup>1</sup> Shop selling children's games and stationery.

Students would come to school wearing any clothes...the school looked like a fun fair. The principal turned to a company who volunteered to invest money in school uniform. Suddenly, children arrived to school wearing school uniform. The school finally looked neat and pleasant.

It seems that children's clothes (prior to the non-uniform adoption) became a dangerous eyesore to school staff. Although the uniform-matter did not seem as big an issue initially as teaching and learning, it was important just the same. It was as if teachers would never have embraced the school's goals if uniform was not put in place. School uniform was a test of commitment to the values and a chance for them to take a concrete, tangible form. Christopher was not only able to say 'the school has these values', but it was able to embed them in practice and make them credible inside and outside the walls. The school went beyond the lists of values listed on MOEC's papers and used its own codified set of values and principles as a strategic guidance system.

Information of what actually happens inside classrooms created disquieting news for the school. The principal often resisted sharing such information broadly with teachers because he worried about being unfairly blamed when the information does not made them look good. Christopher found that one of the teachers and also a vice-principal of the school was not able to handle the class. Christopher was a kind of person who 'would not hesitate to take an incapable teacher out of class, even a vice principal' (Principal). He suggested that he leave his class and take another leadership role. He preferred to place a younger teacher with much more energy to take on the class instead. Christopher's initiative demonstrated his determination to move and act quickly and communicated his belief that easing the situation was crucial and possible. In his own way he made it clear to the assistant principals that a prosperous future is the only issue. But he assured his staff that if some changes were not made in the school, problems would continue to persist.

### **4.2.2 Inadequate Attention to the Instructional Core**

Teachers were using many different curricula with varying degrees of rigor. The assistant principal noted that 'the picking up and choosing from different textbooks which pieces to use in the classroom must be stopped.' The absence of standardised instruction presented an almost insurmountable obstacle to success. As curriculum guides were non-existent, teaching varied widely in content, rigor and instruction. And because teachers were autonomous in selecting teaching materials, there was no system-wide focus or consistency. According to the vice-principal, 'if a minority student whose parent is highly mobile chose to attend another school he or she would be taught different material.' In the process, children were short-changed. The principal emphasised the need for a new curriculum aligned to standards. As he explained:

A curriculum framework which outlines curricular goals defines a vision of instruction and assessment and provides precise expectations of what students are to know and be able to do by the end of each grade level or school subject.

Thus, a notion and introduction of a common curriculum in diverse schools would mean that all teachers would be expected to teach the same material.

In addition, the curriculum did not take into account student's particular needs. For example, it failed to take into consideration the continuity, progression and cohesion in language learning that would ensure the quality of the provision of learning support. Teachers also needed to differentiate the delivery of the curriculum based on their students' particular needs. Differentiating as to what a child needs, according to the principal, was a critical aspect of success. He believed that teachers must understand the learning needs of their students and deliver a rigorous curriculum in differentiated ways to meet those needs. But the teachers believed that the structures were not adequate for such a kind of teaching. For example, the teacher explained they need useful frequent data

about how their students are doing. But instructional records were not written and there was no centralised data source. As the teacher noted:

In order to do [differentiate instruction] teachers need frequent data about how students are doing. There are still no formal assessments to test students' knowledge.

The teacher's only concern was that the principal's main attention focused on 'whether students felt well and not on academic achievement per cent.' As conflict and tension were more than common in the school, often causing a stressing environment, the principal seemed to consider students' emotions first and did not seem to create the necessary conditions for high-quality instruction.

At Ares, for different groups of people educational purpose meant different things. For example, practitioners, parents and outside organisations emphasised different kind of goals such as maintaining safety, supporting mental health, promoting moral and social development, and preparing students for the world of work. But a 'diverse perspective on the larger mission of education can have the effect of diffusing, if not confusing the focus' (Gomez et al., 2009, p. 84).

At Ares, one of the most important goals of education, that of high quality learning, was questionable as the school structure and the 'unorganisation', as the teacher called, it could not facilitate high-quality teaching and learning. High-quality education was definitely not the strong aim of the school. As the teacher noted:

There is unorganisation everywhere. I tell them 'we have a problem' and the answer they give is 'differentiate your teaching'. I am wondering how can we move forward if structures are not put in place?

The fact that the teacher had to experience the 'school as it is' created a deep dissonance with what she believed the 'school as it should be'. She was angry

after having to experience the difference between what it ought to be and what it actually was. The feeling of anger caused inertia throughout the school and teachers often tended to ignore signs of the need for action. This finding can be explained by Granovetter (2005) who states that words, values, moral traditions, and a sense of personal dignity can function as critical sources of the motivation to act. He further notes that people rarely mobilise to protest inequality as such, but they do mobilise to protest 'unjust' inequality.

### **4.2.3 Towards Equity with Relationships**

At Ares, the principal's openness and receptivity to what was going on in teachers' classrooms was a critical issue for his work ahead. He constantly tried to energise, encourage and enable teachers to bring out their energy that exists naturally within them. He also encouraged them to openly express their emotions, commonly talk about how they were feeling, and exchange emotionally laden stories about work and home life. Leadership, and especially the feelings that Christopher modelled and endorsed in their members, had significant impact. I would suggest that if these practices were lacking, teachers would have to either suppress their personal feelings or express them privately in a way that is not acknowledged or endorsed by the organisation. Teachers were also encouraged to talk not only about their task progress but also about how they were feeling about their work, and about non-work issues.

Christopher also used teams as the building blocks of the school. A growing number of teachers welcomed the opportunity to participate as a team in a range of school programmes. According to Christopher teams encouraged communication, teamwork and creativity across all disciplines. Teamwork was much more than the sharing of authority. Although some of the people in the school disagreed about many aspects of what Christopher was doing, they were united in working together on behalf of the whole school. His leadership style moved away from sharing leadership to inviting and allowing teachers to make the full contribution they could into the school. Christopher thought it was

important to have each teacher 'feel' a responsibility for the larger organisation as a whole as well as to his or her own area of responsibility. He noted that teachers are often concerned only about their own area, and team meetings are not constructive. Thus for the system to succeed, the principal stressed that every member of the team had to care about every part of the organisation, no matter what their particular responsibilities were. He explained that:

the school cannot function on its own. Here we function as a team. We all attend seminars, and not just myself. Responsibilities and duties are the same...At present I might be sitting here but not be surprised if you see a newly recruited teacher sitting. I don't feel that she is taking my authority. She is just helping the school to move forward.

Christopher valued openness throughout the school, one that is open and collaborative rather than constrained by formal channels. He was constantly trying to keep structures as non-hierarchical as possible. He encompassed the idea that the teachers' voice in how things happen at the school could be encouraged and respected, so that people were able speak more freely. As one teacher explained: 'Christopher eliminates privilege and rank in every possible way and he always tries to be fair and respectful with everyone.'

Moreover, for Ares to function everyone had to contribute, feel responsible and work hard. As the principal put it:

In the present school you can't come expecting that you will be working by yourself. Others need to be involved in that process otherwise nothing can be achieved without them.

According to Christopher, if one person failed to carry out his duties, the organisation would fail as well. Christopher also noted that teachers need to possess some measure of qualities and generic competencies, such as forms of efficacy that are critical factors in facing challenging circumstances:

Apart from providing them with support and ensuring a less stressful environment the school is hungry for teachers who are strong, efficacious and resilient.

It seems that resilience is extremely important in such prolonged contexts where problems are frequent. Although Christopher wanted to his teachers to feel resilient and efficacious, he also believed that the school climate helped teachers to overcome difficulties fast:

When you come here you forget who you are, the values that you bring with you and you are put in a new climate. And when teachers come here, the first few weeks they cry, have negative reactions about the school...however when they soon realise that the climate is supportive and our relationships help them to make progress they want to stay.

Despite the positive climate and supportive environment that was formed, the school teachers pointed to the lack of structural conditions that ensure high-quality learning and teaching. The principal promoted a supportive culture conducive to the 'caring' and 'loving' behaviours that he was promoting. However, teachers had a different opinion on the needs and purpose of the school. In particular, the teacher noted:

Christopher wants to make the kids feel good. He wants good relationships with parents. But these are not enough...there is a lack of real support from those at the top. When I say mention these issues they think that I am avoiding situations.

In contrast the principal noted:

Teachers must do their job without fear. Everything is possible if we try hard. They must be close to children – if he or she hugs them kids will follow her. The teacher must be close to the children in order to feel them. This is what I want.

Although the principal had asked for support from the MOEC, the conditions changed only to a minimum degree. The end result was that teachers remained frustrated with their main concerns on curriculum remaining unchanged. In a similar vein Levine (2005) notes that 'shared leadership is not working, and real commitment cannot be built, if people have deep reservations that they do not express'.

The principal was worried that some teachers get stuck on their individual work refusing to change, others go to the school to do their job, and leave. He thought that the school needed teachers who collaborate and discuss problems. He also recognised the need for collaboration as teachers need to share ideas on teaching with other teachers, discuss how to help students having problems and examine common challenges faced in the classroom. As Christopher noted:

The teacher must be the teacher of the whole school and not his class. It is of great importance to feel that the purpose is common and not because I am a teacher of my class I am not interested what the person next door is doing. In other words I see something bad, I run to reach it even if it's not my student. Reaching a problem comes before correcting and healing.

At Ares, teachers not only got themselves occupied with problems involving their class but they also avoided using conflict arising from different parts of the school. Christopher believed that conflict should not be hidden or ignored, but rather it should be acknowledged and made to work for the school. These findings are reflected in Mary Parker Follett's assertions cited by Graham (2003) that:

it is possible to conceive of conflict as not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities but a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all. (p. 20)



#### **4.2.4 Community Involvement and a Sense of Belonging**

The principal's values towards social responsibility made him more attentive to societal, community and school needs and more willing to support innovations to address the needs. Christopher had the capability to address social problems by acting in the interest of students. As was noted earlier, partnerships with outsiders can make tangible improvements in communities in schools. This time real change came when they pursued its interests while including the community at large. As such, Christopher thought systematically with awareness of the local context:

The multicultural school is a way of life...it is not just a place for learning,  
we are preoccupied not only with children but also with parents.

Christopher also made a concerted effort to bring parents into the reform equation as full partners. This was a significant change from previous administrations and helped to shore up community support. Prior to Christopher's arrival, many parents felt alienated from the schools, particularly non-native-Greek speakers. They were intimidated by the school system, unwilling or unable to speak to the teachers, and were uncertain about how to help their children succeed academically and socially.

When Christopher made a strategic choice to invest himself in building relationships with parents he presented his early reform ideas in a way that gave all of the stakeholders a sense of ownership of the change process. He wanted to have everyone play a part in leadership and in problem resolution. Shared responsibility for decision making meant joint ownership of outcomes and results. He believed that blurring the lines between leadership and governance would diffuse former antagonisms and process. The principal thought that he could not simply tell parents that what they were doing was wrong. Instead, they needed to work closely with parents to gain their trust and to include them in every aspect of both the reform details and the implementation process. 'It is

important to listen to their concerns and gain their trust' (Principal). The principal used his political skills to find ways to build connection in ways that would support his agenda for breaking up the link between race, income and student outcomes.

Early in his strategy implementation, the principal had to show parents that the plan was working because, as he noted, it 'is essential to gain the confidence of parents and staff'. He believed that the community needs to have confidence in what principals say and do. He started from showing parents what happened in the previous months and the adjustments that were made to increase effectiveness. The staff showed that their support was improving student achievement for all students. Results bring more positive attitudes, which allow the school to build more capacity to produce better results, starting the cycle anew. 'When results are seen they become more accepted,' he noted. In other words, Christopher continued to bolster the school's relationship with parents by making as much information as possible clear and accessible. All information and materials related to school improvements and reforms were made public in hard copy and published in multiple languages.

Making information available – strategies, standards, school success measures, student achievement – put parents in the driver's seat. When parents have information about the school's responsibilities and expectations, for itself and for all students, they feel more invested in the reform process. Every Christmas the principal would ask parents whether they wanted their children to sing songs in different languages. Critical to the success of the school's strategy was 'the support of Greek-Cypriot parents who were less likely to see Turkish-Cypriot singing in a positive way and could sabotage the school's entire strategy' (Principal). One explanation for these findings is that people derive personal esteem from their membership in groups and thus they strived to establish the positive distinctiveness of their group relative to other groups (Tajfel, 1979). Similarly, Mummendey, Klink and Brown note that (2001) people who identify more strongly with their group are more motivated to maintain their group's

positive distinctiveness. The principal's 'secret' – as he called it – was fairness and it was fair for Cypriot students to sing minority people's songs in the same way that they sing Greek songs.

The principal also tried to strengthen community relationships by creating interdependent tasks so that each group's expertise was equally valued. The principal helped to manage these intergroup dynamics by actively speaking of the unique perspectives brought by various groups and their contributions to larger organisational goals. The principal by making all the practices of the school public ensured that every single student retained his or her unique meaning and integrity while being nested within a larger organisational whole.

According to Christopher cooperation amongst different groups is achieved by providing treatment that communicates status and respect. The principal explained that 'when interactions with leaders are characterised by politeness and dignity the organization will move forward.' At Ares, fair treatment inspired parents to cooperate with the school. Excluding minority groups increases the risk of conflict, and Christopher knew this well. In order to reduce the sense of vulnerability of others he offered them a chance to talk about school and non-school issues in a safe environment. Apart from caring behaviours, diplomacy also helped the school ensure that parents' interests were represented even when they showed up furious. In particular he pointed out:

We have to show concern about their rights and diplomacy. Diplomacy is crucial in relationships. When parents come here to express a complaint that nobody gives attention to his child...when you approach him in a different way, more humanistic he also feels different. I invite them in my office and offer them coffee. It is important to know how to behave, how to approach them so that you don't cause more problems. You also have to be careful on how you present the truth. You don't have to make it seem that things are brilliant. Your job as a principal is to solve the problem so that conflict goes away and the school can function normally.

Christopher seemed to be highly concerned about the rights of group members. Whereas competition between groups produced prejudice and discrimination, interdependent and cooperative interactions that resulted in successful outcomes seemed to reduce bias. It was well established that cooperation was an essential element for contact to reduce prejudice. However, Ares needs to be distinguished from any other school as historical relations between groups differed. Ares' cultural groups had a history of conflict and thus it was not relatively easy to facilitate empathy and perspective taking and to build trust. Christopher noted that one reason that makes minority students better off in a less homogeneous school is conflict. The presence of Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot students caused various student discipline issues; lunch hours were often marked by tension, fights were common and teachers were worried about safety. Although these conflicts were not as common now as they were before, Christopher could be seen everywhere in the building and he shared his concerns with students and teachers. But it was not just his presence that created an orderly, respectful environment. It was his competence to deal issues from the root of the problem.

As conflict was a key word in Christopher's interview, when he was asked to given further explanations as to what conflict means or name some examples he noted:

Conflict is caused when a Turkish religious guide comes to school, sits at the principal's office and all children say 'Hello' to him. Another conflict lies in Greek-Cypriots interactions towards Turkish-Cypriots. Greek-Cypriots must start talking to Turkish-Cypriots. It needs to become compulsory.

It seems that members of diverse groups are less likely to be attracted to one another. School stakeholders assumed that those who share their demographic characteristics also share their underlying opinions, values and perspectives. As groups held contrasting religious beliefs such as that of Islam and Christian

Orthodox, the presence of priests was more likely to fuel interpersonal conflicts.

While Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot ethnic identities seemed to require more work to reach a celebratory state, the school also sought to shape gender-identities. The principal noted that he preferred having more men teachers in the school as students respected men more than women:

Muslims believe that women were born to stay at home and obey their husbands...students have no respect towards female teachers...However, slowly we try to involve more women through participating in school activities and volunteering and more recently we have the first Muslim woman in the school committee.

Celebrating identity in this way, the school was bringing more women into the school. Thus, the school was connecting women to the organisation while making gender identities more salient.

#### **4.2.5 Leadership Development**

The principal noted that the programme fails to provide candidates familiarity with oppression and prejudice. The study showed that teachers and principals do not necessarily realise their prejudiced assumptions until they arrived at the school. Upon his arrival at the school Christopher came face to face with triggers which offset his self-awareness. For example, he pointed out that the presence of Turkish-Cypriots at the school reminded him and the newly appointed teachers of their personal histories in relation to the group. In fact, critical elements of one's personal history include one's family, childhood, culture, education, occupation, work experience, role models and prior leadership experiences. Christopher's personal history of life experiences served to shape his identity. The diversity challenges served as trigger events that stimulated his positive growth and development. The developmental process here started when he started to interpret accumulated life experiences, and continued with their ongoing interpretation of trigger events over time causing further self-

development. It seems that self-awareness is not just a process whereby one comes to reflect on one's unique values, identity, emotions, goals, knowledge, talents and/or capabilities, oftentimes triggered by external events. It is also a process of prioritising values, principles and loyalties as well as identifying those unspeakable ones.

Apart from self-awareness and value systems, the principal pointed to the need of knowledge and skills. He pointed out that in his professional time he seeks and finds books related to multicultural education. He reported investing time in himself by carrying out research of the theoretical supports of current practice. He displayed commitment to learning and developing himself. One consequence of this approach is a strong sense of relevance and motivation. The leader felt motivated in engaging with multicultural education:

To work in this school you must read something more. You take ownership of your learning. It is necessary to be involved in research that involves multicultural education.

He also stressed reading essential for anyone who wants to lead in such schools. Knowledge and understanding of leadership was also included in the model of Capper, Theoharis and Sebastian (2006) on preparing leadership for social justice. In particular they note 'school leaders for social justice need to know about evidence-based practices that can create an equitable school' (p. 213). The principal knew very well that evidence-based practices are often enacted inside the school walls and the classroom-based education has not helped him very much. He therefore proposed that:

The course needs to combine theory and practice. I like the fact that the programme has been modelled around learning theory; however, some things are not connected what is going on daily in our schools. For example, in this school I have developed diplomacy skills how to be fair and how to approach groups of people.

Thus work experience has helped him to acquire the necessary cognitive, interpersonal and strategic skills necessary to lead in a diverse school. Christopher believed that future principals could have an internship period in the school, working alongside an experienced principal or a coach:

Now I am leaving and I am not very sure that the person who will replace this school will know how to deal with these kind of problems. It took us five years to come to the point we are now. Will the principal be able to follow and learn all these things so fast? I think the best solution is to have that future principal come here and work with us, watch us how we make decisions. This is a powerful way to learn because otherwise he will find it extremely hard to follow.

The principal also believed that investment in professional development would have limited effectiveness if MOEC cannot recruit and retain talented people with the potential and foundational skills to manage a modern diverse school. One big disadvantage of the current selection process 'is that the MOEC does not create opportunities to recruit and select people who not only have the skills necessary for their roles but a disposition toward rapid change and improvement.' (Assistant Principal)

The teacher pointed out that principals need ongoing training in instructional leadership. In particular, she recommended that programmes could have a focus on principals' beliefs about students and their ability to learn and grow versus having been 'born smart'. According to the teacher, effort and hard work makes students achieve but teachers need help from well-prepared, capable school principals.

The principal noted that he is planning to ask for promotion into another school as he is starting to feel the burnout. In particular, he noted 'no one can force us to stay here. I am really tired and I can no longer continue working here'. It seems

that the work in diverse schools demands lots of energy and the principal believed that he would be better off in another school before starting to lose himself in the process. A question that still remains is whether well-prepared principals placed in less dysfunctional schools would still want to leave.

### **4.3 School Leander**

Elpida, the school principal, was extremely serious about her work. She would take her free time to teach minority students because she had confidence in them and she expected them to learn and progress. However, the area in which Leander is located is homogeneous – racially, socially and economically – and has made the life of its community members more difficult. Students came from many countries and spoke different languages. The school consisted of 52% Greek-Cypriots, 7% Bulgarians, 7% Greeks 6% Georgians, 5% Romanians, 4% Turkish-Cypriots, 5% Russians, 4% Syrians, 10% from other countries.

Although it had been only a year since MOEC had placed Leander under the ZEP umbrella, the school stakeholders were still confused as to the priorities and expectations of ZEP and encountered a variety of challenges. Some of these challenges were technical and related to ZEP policies outlined by the MOEC. Other challenges were implicit in the task of leading equity and excellence. Once again this case study illustrates that diverse schools require both leaders and followers to engage in collaborative practices. In so doing, they need to seriously address teaching and learning that pays attention to the cultural characteristics of children. This case study starts with vision. According to school faculty, leaders accomplish direction when there is agreement among the collective members of the group regarding the aim, mission, vision or goal of the collective's shared work.

#### **4.3.1 Vision**

All participants pointed out that schools do not need MOEC's guidance to spur development and progress. Specifically, the imposition of bureaucratic goals,



plans, solutions and processes based on extensive and practical experience in other schools could not have ensured success at Leander. Instead, teachers at Leander met frequently to define problems, to discuss issues and to seek solutions to common problems. For staff, meetings were the place where they emphasised connecting members to each other, facilitating dialogue and discussion to reach consensus and encouraging new solutions to persistent problems. The school also had a set of proposed goals of what could be done only if the system was not so centralised. As the teacher noted:

Now with the ZEP we are more adequately resourced to meet the needs of all students but there are still problems. For example, the HM Revenue and Customs is our biggest problem. We need to close the school buildings so that students do not escape any time they want. And academically we need to focus on student psychological needs, the overloaded curriculum...

The MOEC has created many extensive rules to manage every aspect of school life (from curriculum to school facilities) along with complex structures to manage these rules and procedures. Although teachers seemed to have clarified assumptions that can help the school move forward, policy makers are still those who mandate change. As the teacher put it:

We do not participate at all in the development of goals that comes from the MOEC; goals are given and we are just the executants either we believe it or not. Apart from the goals of the MOEC we have our own goals but they are deeply influenced in their accomplishment because if you don't believe in such goals or they don't express your values and beliefs they don't concern you.

According to the teacher change will only come about through local capacity and local will. Similarly, Elpida believed that Leander could be guided in its reform choices by findings from research and decisions and suggestions made by those closest to the problem – in other words, principals and teachers. The findings suggest that when teachers felt genuine involvement with their task and felt a

sense of ownership and accountability, changes occurred. Thus, success depended on the extent to which those in the organisation internalised a common purpose and perceived the connection between their actions and the organisation's ability to fulfil this common purpose.

The involvement of teachers in programmes developed by external agents was also complex. This was particularly evident when the teacher reported that 'growing successful schools is not likely to be accomplished by transplant programmes or designs from one school into another.' In a similar vein, Darling-Hammond (2010) speaks about replication strategies: 'replication efforts have an inglorious history, largely because they quickly run up against differences in staff knowledge and capacity, resources, and contexts of receiving schools' (p. 272).

The introduction of ZEP brought with it confusion and frustration as nobody knew how it worked and what was expected from the school staff. The school had to wait for the professional development team of ZEP to come and explain how the programme worked, so, according to a teacher, 'the school has lost time in learning and understanding what was happening'. The MOEC and the introduction of ZEP lacked the necessary capacity to support successful change. It mainly introduced ZEP on paper; unaccompanied by early professional development support which would have attended the various nuances and implications of the new strategy. As the principal put it:

When ZEP was introduced there was first unorganisation because we found it just before the end of the previous year and secondly because the district and inspectors don't have a clue of what ZEP means, what we are allowed and what we are not allowed.

The early, unorganised days of ZEP into Leander had negative consequences over the long term. Apart from difficulties in understanding what ZEP means and what must be done, the school had to take advantage of a certain amount of money that came from government budgets. The problem with this was that if

principals and teachers introduced effective techniques the school would be more likely to change and innovate. If some early techniques didn't work immediately, especially for students who were challenging to teach, staff would tend to revert to old approaches and focus on reaching those who were easiest to teach given what teachers already knew how to do. Leander introduced various strategies including management of breaks, purchase of games in assisting relationships between students of different backgrounds, visits throughout the island, hiring of teachers in the afternoons to help students do their homework, speech therapists, improving gardens, building of library. These changes probably worked successfully, but the problem continued to be embedded in the less visible aspects of leadership work: the culture of 'blame' and social capital.

For the vice-principal one important role of a school principal was spelling out how to get everyone in the school to move from the current state to the desired new state. In her own words: 'The job of the principal is to describe the major steps as well as how and when teachers will become engaged in accomplishing a goal.'

#### **4.3.2 Social Capital**

At Leander family and community relations were seen as specific to minority groups. Minority families negotiated their everyday lives in the host society and drew on resources in the process of integration and accommodation. These responses were explained by the teacher:

Despite school's efforts in bringing all students together and teaching them how to effectively communicate and respectfully interact with people of different cultures, problems continue to exist, in regards the acceptance of minority students from our [Cypriot] children...and also socio-economic reasons, especially in this school where minority children come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. As a result our [Cypriot] children see these things and they ask whether they are poor when their parents are registered as asylum seekers and they get more money than some of their parents.

Lack of economic opportunities, shame and frustration contributed to immigrants' feelings of anger. However, a similar anger existed within segments of the Greek-Cypriot population. When they were told that immigrants get salaries from the government, that their children were offered one-to-one tuition and that they were told that their fears about crime in urban neighbourhoods were prejudiced, resentment started to build over time. People had to embrace the burdens of their past without becoming the victims of their past. It seems that relations among immigrants and their children are not inherent ethnic properties brought from homelands, but the results of responses to the challenges and deprivation of the host country.

Teachers also noted that minority parents' concentration at the centre of cities and lack of place in the host society's mainstream leads minority groups to form closely linked social structures. The principal felt that the school and the area in which it was located had become very isolated from the rest of the world. Only students, teachers and the occasional parent knew that there were open doors; very few outsiders came in. She decided to begin her work by opening up Leander to the larger community, contacting businesses some of whom she knew personally, in an attempt to form partnerships that would bring funding and resources into the school. This was one of the first steps to begin making changes. She organised school trips as an opportunity for children to see other lifestyles and places. For example, the principal would take students to the airport to see a real plane so that when they read about planes they would understand. Such real-work connections sustained students' interest and involvement in difficult tasks.

With these activities, the principal hoped that teachers would start forming more positive generalisations about minority students. But teachers' perceptions of students who belonged to a particular minority group were different from others. These perceptions, however, leave open the question of why there is a variation

among minority groups. For those who came from a professional/middle-class background, their priority was to work hard and gain certification that would consolidate their class positioning. As a teacher noted:

These children received homework assistance from parents despite the fact they had no clue in language and they were more likely seen in school asking about their children's progress and taking part in school activities.

Such children were able to draw upon valuable cultural and social capital in terms of positive dispositions to learning and a 'sense of place' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17) in navigating the education system, albeit in a new country. Students typically drew upon social networks, mostly within their own ethnic communities that enhanced their knowledge about how to get on in Cyprus. Within certain families and communities there was clear evidence of concerted cultivation, as children engaged in additional study activities at weekends through organised Saturday and Sunday schools. With Turkish-Cypriot families the principal thought that:

The visit of students and the come and forth of students breaks them up from school. They can't say 'I'm here and I will live here forever'.

Access to a community of support was highly significant to successful transition to Cyprus. Some of the children were rich in social capital within their own ethnic community, most notably where immigrant communities clustered in particular geographic areas. This was especially evident in children in the Muslim community, as well as those from other various countries, all of whom spoke of attendance at structured religious and social activities at weekends. For Bourdieu (1986) such 'occasions, places or in practices' are key in bringing together 'individuals as homogeneous as possible in all the pertinent respects in terms of the existence and persistence of the group' (p. 250).

According to school faculty, immigrant students walked a delicate line between

recognition versus rejection that was predicated on the extent to which they accommodated to dominant ways of 'being' and 'doing' among their Cypriot peers. Students rarely spoke about their ethnic identities as being a positive attribute in their relations with Cypriot peers – it had little exchange value and did not convert readily into social capital in the classroom. The children's relatively uncritical stance of their schooling can be understood in terms of their minority positioning, as 'newcomers' in the field. While pointing out these issues the teacher noted the introduction of new opportunities through which children could express themselves. There was a general absence in accessing children's voices on their experience of schooling. The following activities were taken from the school principal as a way to allow individual differences and identities to surface:

At school celebrations students are encouraged to wear something that showed a side to their identity. Children expose their religious and social preferences. On another event we organised games during recess times to reinforce the idea that children might play on different teams, while being in the same game. The school also invited parents to share food and recipes.

The principal stressed that children had to learn something more about international cuisines. The school staff noticed on several occasions children testing each other's food. She continued noting:

Now cultural diversity was less emotional and confrontational, becoming more colourful. By exposing their identities was seen by many as a growth process and not a weakness anymore.

The strategy of allowing differences to surface became well established and children now felt that they could express their individuality.

### 4.3.3 Quality Teaching and Learning

School faculty believed that the language programme prescribed for schools with minority students was ineffective. They noted that there is a need to create a separate class that would meet longer and more frequently to adequately meet the needs of the students. The high percentage of students requiring Greek demonstrated the limitations of a common lesson of a class of students with diverse needs. Participants believed that the way they taught Greek did not engage students at all. The teacher, for example, observed a close connection between lack of student interest, misbehaviour and student achievement. She noted: 'nothing is accomplished by having students who can neither understand nor speak Greek...just sitting in classrooms.'

Participants also pointed out that incorporation of culture into the curriculum is important in helping students understand what it means to be who they are. Literature, they argued, can be very effective in this regard because it can help students to identify and empathise with people from different backgrounds. Field trips and out-of-class experiences provided students with opportunities to learn about the experiences of others and also helped to expand their horizons. There was an agreement between teachers and principals that students need to be fascinated by opportunities to learn more about the world around them. They also pointed out that students want to see themselves in the curriculum –this will make them feel less angry about their invisibility. As the teacher and the principal noted:

The children I teach are more likely to be productive members of society if they have a strong sense of self to accompany their mastery of the curriculum. (Teacher)

Considering the fact that these students are underachieving, it is important to engage these students in activities that they are interested in and in which can present their emotions and identities. For instance, immigrant children's experiences need to be included too. Children who come from

Russia can benefit from practising theatre. Because their culture promotes it. (Principal)

The extent to which the formal curriculum reflected diversity was limited. Participants thought that student outcomes could be improved if students became more engaged with cultural activities and knowledge. It was recognised that schools still favour and officially recognise a limited body of student knowledge. The teachers in particular challenged assumptions and practices around what counts as learning and whose knowledge counts when considering the knowledge of minority groups. It has been argued that 'whose knowledge counts is tied to notions of who belongs or what belongs in schools' (Arzubiaga, Noguron and Sullivan, 2009, p. 251). Including other groups' knowledge into the curriculum can enhance creativity and innovation especially in terms of reflecting diversity. Certainly, this research suggests that even in schools where diversity and equity were celebrated, there was evidence that curriculum creativity was of minimum importance. The only form of creativity they received was that from school excursions that provided students with background information about subjects they might not have access to otherwise. These experiences introduced students to vocabulary that could enrich their writing and speech and prepare them for the difficult and content-focused texts. Teachers believed that anti-social behaviour, name-calling and inter-ethnic hostility would only diminish when the curriculum was revised. As the teacher noted:

The present curriculum is too demanding for students to follow and merely covering the curriculum does not enrich the intellectual opportunities of children.

Texts were designed to support and monitor the transmission of facts and basic skills, with little demand for complex applications. The curriculum was so overloaded that it was not tailored to students' needs and the teachers taught for the sake of getting through the book. The teacher believed that the curriculum itself and the way it was taught did not help minority students develop strong



thinking skills. In addition, overloaded texts took the time that teachers needed to meet the diverse needs of students who brought with them varying talents, interests and cultures. As the assistant principal put it:

There are more curricular aims that can be taught in the time available. The goals of the school do not reflect what I believe. Generally, the goals in all schools should be more humanitarian and not just to cover the learning part. The inspector will check their progress in Greek, Maths...however we need some long-term goals like development of social culture of students, students also need skills in self-identification and skills so that they will be able to solve psychological problems – these students need psychological support. I think that in Cyprus, although such goals exist they are not cultivated enough because they come second. Their achievement is short-term and cannot be measured.

The participants felt that Cypriot schools need to restructure from the old bureaucratic assembly line model to new quality management systems emphasising problem-solving teams rather than prescriptive hierarchies. The educational system reinforced principals to think how their schools could work more efficiently rather than thinking how teaching and learning could be pursued, how systems should operate, and what goals for schooling were taught. In a similar vein, Popham (2009) notes that ‘excessive curricular aspirations have an unforeseeable but devastating impact on educational quality’ (p. 2). As teachers were preoccupied to ‘teach targets’, students’ status regarding those aims could not be accurately measured in the hour. Another significant problem was that too many curricular aims engendered a coverage-quest climate, wherein teachers tried to cover all curricular targets, even if only superficially. This placed minority students in greater danger that needed more attention and instruction for each curriculum aim. In addition, the teacher noted: ‘Inspectors are only interested to see whether the aims have been covered.’

It seems that bureaucracy once again was constructed to prescribe, manage and control the work of teachers. Top-down prescriptions for teaching practice,

scripted curriculum packages, and the continuing underinvestment in teacher knowledge continued to predominate Cyprus's schools. Scholars have long pointed out that such organisations aim to stimulate thoughtfulness and creativity, rather than focusing largely on enforcing compliance with predetermined procedures (Senge, 1990; Stoll and Temperley, 2009). Elpida, on the other hand, was determined to push hard and improve the learning of minority students. She was driven by the following idea:

The school as it is at present compromises two schools within one building – the majority and the minority school. We have to try and build one community.

Although Elpida was considered a hard-working principal she also believed that it is up to teachers to make decisions on teaching and learning. She chose to 'look the other way' because she trusted teacher's judgement on teaching. What was thus missing was evaluation of quality teaching on the part of the principal. Despite the fact that quality teaching and learning was an essential precondition to achieving wider objectives in the schools, she managed to work on other diversity-issues. Because students had limited access to print materials outside of school, she invested money in developing a small library and ensured that all students read something independently during the school day. However, evaluations and professional learning were still missing from school activities.

#### **4.3.4 Professional Learning**

In recent years, countries such as England, Hungary and Singapore have created opportunities for teachers to engage in school-focused research and development. Teachers have time and support to study and evaluate their teaching strategies and school programmes and share their findings with their colleagues within the school, and through conferences and publications (OECD, 2005). In addition, a lesson study approach is becoming more popular as groups of teachers are starting to observe one another's classrooms and work together to refine individual lessons, expediting the spread of best practices throughout the school

(Darling-Hammond, 2010). Observations showed that teachers at Leander were making less use of their time for improving teaching. Collaboration, collective planning and peer coaching were the least strongest elements of the school.

The truth about Leander was that teachers worked in silos and in highly specialised hierarchies. Few were involved in any kind of mentoring, coaching or collaborative research. Teachers' lack of collaboration in peer learning activities often ended up with them resenting and stereotyping students whom they did not understand, especially when their lack of skills rendered them less successful. As a result teachers sabotaged by their lack of knowledge and skill held particularly low expectations, discouraged their achievement, and punished them disproportionately.

To solve these apparent problems, the teacher highlighted the need for 'a strict, a decisive leader who knows how to take the school from here to there'. The teacher thought that a decisive and prompt leader was needed to address difficult situations and run the school. They looked to their leader and demanded that she exercised more power, and was goal directive and decisive in her style. In addition, the teacher pointed out that in such contexts the use of leadership to articulate goals and expectations and the pathways that need to be followed are also necessary. These findings suggest that individuals look to leaders to centralise authority and take action. Dealing with extended stress, leadership that provides competence, support, structure, priorities, role clarity, effective communication, coordination, and maintains cohesion, focus and calm was identified by teachers as more effective in addressing diversity challenges. Although Elpida would use her own time to teach students and defend their interests, the school lacked a strong sense of urgency needed to keep things going. The teacher further elaborated that:

By a strict leader I don't mean an authoritarian leader but a decisive one...Elpida is a good person and hard-working, and because she is a good person, it influences her in managing some situations which she should

have commanded. If a principal can't make the right decision quickly and effectively the school will lose.

Elpida was not the kind of person keeping control of her constituencies and the teacher felt that some kind of control was necessary to keep expectations high. However, those decisions must also be taken consistently. According to Elpida making good decisions and making them happen quickly are the hallmarks of high-performing organisations:

A school such as this one cannot afford to have teachers who the only thing they do is merely point a finger at unjust laws and social publicity. I don't mean the principal has to pressure them with humiliation or with an authoritarian attitude but one who encourages teachers to do more than they have to, take risks and also bring the school outwards and reach the community.

I would suggest that in bureaucratic educational systems if one does his or her job well and manage the school to run smoothly he or she will be rewarded. Such systems work for those who get along with their immediate superiors. These principals don't push the system, they don't take risks and they are scared that if they do so it may lead to negative publicity. Thus, these principals do not welcome failures in the same way that they welcome successes. Similarly, Elpida did not dare to take risks to meet success in the face of powerful waves. Both the teacher and the vice-principal noted that Elpida is an over-democratic leader and that this strength takes her too far.

### **4.3.5 Disconnection Between Teaching and Principalship**

The vice-principal was an acting principal for two weeks. All that time he realised the following set of facts:

A principal ceases to be an educator – he or she is a manager and he must have all the characteristics of a scientist who leads a 'business'. The school

is like managing a business. You want to take it from here to there and at the same you need to have results.

His reaction to principalship was not unusual. He claimed that a teacher who becomes a principal is no longer a teacher. As principals get promoted, they rise from the action base of the specialist to the abstract planes of the generalist and they end up disconnected from what they are supposed to lead. This disconnection from their specialised work that they knew to do so well to the new responsibilities embedded in the work of a 'business', as the teacher called it, can get frustrating. At Leander this disconnection continued to get bigger as Elpida did seem to overcome the nuisance. This split-off leadership work was exacerbated as Elpida sat in her office, lacking the information necessary to connect adequately to the work of teachers and teachers themselves. Thus, it was very rare to find her out of the office and into the places where the school served its basic purpose. As it was noted earlier, Elpida thought that entering teacher's classrooms was 'intrusion'. The principal preferred to 'drop in' rather than have personal presence, in body and spirit. The problem with disconnections was that as Elpida got trapped in macro leading work, she didn't know what was going on in other places. In this case, the principal left all the detailed work to the hands of teachers, leaving the isolated office as her main territory to work. Although the principal was particularly alert in sensing problems before becoming serious issues, she avoided conversations regarding teaching and learning because she regarded it as judgemental. In her explanations she noted:

I am very careful with teachers because I don't know how they are going to signal it if I ask them questions all the time or make judgements about their work.

Elpida then continued being cut off from what actually takes place in her school's classrooms. Instead, principals that affirmatively seek out a true picture of what is going on inside as well as outside the classrooms could be more successful.

### 4.3.6 Working with Conflict

Although Elpida paid inadequate attention to the instructional core, she was very effective at managing conflict. She encouraged people to bring conflicts to the surface, both because she viewed them as a sign of organisational health and because they provided an opportunity to demonstrate the style of dialogue she advocated. She tried to create an environment for disagreement by reminding teachers that the conflict was not personal. Her purpose was to bring differences to the surface. In her own words:

Parents want to be able to feel that they come here and be themselves. They believe that they have their own world and culture and that it does not fit with the one that the school promotes.

Elpida tried to resolve conflict by bringing identity issues to the surface more frequently. She noted that 'schools take ethnicity for granted and as a result they fail to acknowledge other people's experiences'. Thus she tried to bring people of different races together by organising school activities. The main reason was to:

Get parents of different cultures together to talk about issues that trouble them and realise that they are not alone and that other people experience similar problems. Getting to know each other better makes people feel connected.

Elpida believed that bringing similar groups together was beneficial as it gave them the opportunity to discuss their experiences and anxieties. She also emphasised the fact that simply providing people with an opportunity to get to know one another is not enough in diverse environments. She noted that 'diverse parents avoid disclosing personal information to us because they are afraid that we will judge them negatively.' Thus concealing personal information that could highlight one's characteristics such as race or gender, or that could invoke negative stereotypes associated with those characteristics, was avoided. In fact

by concealing such personal information parents thought that they could diminish the salience of visible characteristics, such as race or gender, whereas revealing such information they could increase the salience of those characteristics. To promote close relationships between dissimilar groups the school placed greater value on actively listening to different cultural perspectives with increased culture of respect. In improving relationships Elpida acknowledged the pre-existing perceptions of status distance and then worked proactively to establish structure, practices and an organisational culture that lowers the barrier of status distance.

The school used such processes of interrogating identities in order to break down divisions and create solutions that acknowledge the common experience and interdependence of their peers. Elpida recognised that because of language and cultural barriers, the Arab community remained within the confines of their ethnically bound community. She shared her stories about her own understandings of diversity in a way to make parents feel connected. The school therefore allowed individuals to talk about struggles in order to create a culture of interdependence. Their efforts in sharing multiplicity of viewpoints were also reflected in the emphasis that the school members placed on language translators: 'In the past, we didn't have any translators. Now things have changed. Parents feel more connected because we can finally communicate and talk'.

Identity work became fundamental to Elpida's work as it went beyond simply seeing race as ascribed categories. Apart from bringing groups of different cultures together, Elpida also noted that it was important to recognise and respect their differences: 'The parents noted that if we were immigrants in their countries they would have welcomed us to their homes, to eat with them and celebrate with them....' It seems that surfacing conflicting needs, interests, goals and activities is, paradoxically, essential to the long-term goal of a common vision and a shared agenda. Elpida noted the importance of allowing minority groups to express their beliefs and feelings, discuss their differences, and

ultimately draw closer. Recognising dissimilarities among individuals allowed different people to get more involved in school activities. In this process dialogue became crucial in helping groups give voice to their disparate needs and interests.

The principal went further and stressed the school's focus on differences. As she noted:

I know several educators who concentrate on similarities between Cypriot students and diverse students. However, we have to go beyond those similarities and recognise differences as well. Even if the school purpose is common, we can't continue treating all students similar. I disagree with that. We have to emphasise differences for them to feel included.

Thus, emphasising similarities at the expense of differences simply doesn't work. Creating convergence requires identifying divergence as well.

#### **4.3.7 Leadership Development**

The principal noted that the programme does not provide them with authentic problems of practice. The lack of rigor to the work that principals were doing was noted:

I didn't feel that I was learning much after going back to school. The theory did not relate to the problems I was facing at the time. For instance I was learning about this theory, and the school required something else. The programme is not very interactive as we are learning away from schools and practical applications are inexistent. The classes are neither enriching nor realistic. Having a prescribed number of classes does not do you any good.

Thus the critical theories and concepts that were taught at the programmes in an interdisciplinary fashion were not framed around the events and problems that



principals were facing on their return to school. In addition, the principal noted that:

When I had an issue to face in school or preoccupying me all week, when I used to get in the car to drive I was thinking about and I hoped that my problem would be answered. In the end neither my concerns were answered nor I discussed or even mentioned the problem.

It seems that the leadership challenges that the principal faced at the school did not link to any of the anchors of the Pedagogical Institute programme. The anchors taught thereby were not related to applications in schools. The leadership programme failed to connect the principal's problem-situation with the anchors. The principal noted that the seminars that the Pedagogical Institute provided were not effective and that continuous professional development programmes for established school principals could be in place instead.

The principal also stressed the need to recruit staff who are committed to working in a multicultural environment. Staff suitability could be assessed within the selection process with specific interview questions focused on ethnicity issues. It seems that leading diverse schools in which staff want to work, and continue to work, is challenging and requires careful consideration. The principal explained:

The MOEC knows that teachers and principals don't like it coming here. However this has to be changed. I think the MOEC should be looking for people who have the energy and interest to work in such schools.

Although the MOEC recruits principals with strong teaching practice, the reality is quite different. The principal noted that all teachers have similar successful teaching ratings over the years and the MOEC could instead offer group interviews to see participants working collaboratively to solve a problem based on a real challenge in the field. Observing and rating applicants in this way could

be a more reliable way than mainly interviewing.

Professional development of teachers could not be missed and in particular the principal suggests:

The lack of familiarity with teaching practices in mixed effort classrooms and culturally responsive education are major issues. Teachers say that they have problems but they do not understand that they have to differentiate teaching to accommodate student needs.

Despite teachers' lack of differentiation, the kind of flexibility that characterised Elpida in her work was enormous:

To work in such schools one has to accept the diversity of tasks needed to make education work. One has to be open to working with people doing unexpected things. If you sit and wait for outsiders to walk in and solve your problems, this is not going to happen.

It seems that leaders have to respond to issues that were not in their 'to do' lists.

#### **4.4 School Nestor**

In the past decade, Nestor School was an engaged place for both students and staff. Although there were no 'breakthrough's or dramatic 'turnarounds' in its improvement effort there were periods of significant improvement, followed by periods of relative stasis or decline. During data collection the school was passing through a 'time of crisis' in which staff had to renew its commitment to changing established practices, to endure the uncertainty of restaffing, and to rethink the aspects of the school's context that may have served as resistant to change.

Throughout the case study, minority student's Greek proficiency was made problematic and children were described as entering school with fewer requisite

skills that their native peers. This undereducation was attributed mostly to the group's highly mobile lifestyle. Poverty was also identified as another important factor that undermined the success of minority students. Thus poverty, social issues and cultural differences were commonly referred to as the most common factors of why children cannot learn.

The principal, Christina, admitted being dissatisfied with overall students' performance and raised the need for more resources. This is the only school in the current study that did not belong in the ZEPs. The difficulty of finding the necessary resources lay in the lack of flexibility between the MOEC's mandates and school needs. The school consisted of 58% Greek-Cypriots, 10% Georgia, 10% Bulgaria, 8% Russia, 3% Austria, 3% Ukraine, 2% Syria, 2% Philippines, 1% Lebanon and 3% from other countries.

The school lacked professional teaching culture; continuous improvement through collaboration and job-embedded learning. Students would sit in class quietly with teachers asking them simple questions. Students did produce oral language but when they did it was a simple recall. The social capital of the school's neighbourhood was seen as a significant factor for students' disengagement in the classroom. Some students were living under extraordinary circumstances, creating a significant barrier to improvement in some schools. The school stakeholders believed that their work is principally about teaching and learning and not solving all of the social problems of the community.

### **4.4.1 A History of Non-Linear Improvement**

The school had significant improvements in the early stages of concerted work to improve student learning. These periods of growth were the result of making more efficient use of existing resources, instructional time, teachers' knowledge and skill, and leadership focus. Upon her arrival Christina received extra teaching staff to deal adequately with minority students. Her vision was clear: she thought that the school needed high-quality teaching and extra time and

support for minority students. Although she had no autonomy on the school budget, she managed to get the extra support that these students required.

Teacher-student classroom interactions also became the primary target reform led by the principal. Christina made major changes to improve the quality of instruction, which ultimately raised the student learning. However, she also raised concerns about her lack of autonomy in hiring teachers whose characteristics were consistent with the creation of a culture focused on student achievement. Christina reported:

I want teachers who want to work hard. Unfortunately, they send us teachers who don't want to work long hours to build a high-performing school.

Despite her perceived dissatisfaction with external control on issues such as teacher hiring, Christina shared her practices with other teachers through classroom observations and teacher feedback. She believed that practices are learned through the application of knowledge and skill to concrete problems.

Despite Christina's learning-focused leadership styles, the schools expectations started to increase as more minority students were entering schools. Teachers quickly realised that children have different needs, and can best be approached in a differentiated way that tailors their learning environments to their needs, ways of learning, cultural backgrounds, and prior learning experiences. However, few teachers were adequately prepared, and teachers often failed to convert their energy into effective teaching. The vice principal who arrived at the school at the same time as Christina said:

The school is continually changing and the work is becoming more complicated. Every few months a new group of students comes in and each group requires different treatment. If the school is to meet the challenges that it currently faces it needs further changes and courageous action.

The pervasive differences between groups of students by race, ethnicity, language and socio-economic status had a great impact on teachers' practices. The disparities in the experiences of students in schools were deeply troubling. Perhaps more troubling was teachers' fear of failure and the consequences that this may have on their career. The fear of failure was particularly intense in those who felt the need to change schools to preserve their high-teacher ranking and reputation as good teachers. As one teacher put it:

Working in a diverse school is risky. Even if you do an excellent job with these students, success is not always guaranteed. The consequence is that inspectors will see that and you end up with a really bad grade as a teacher, despite the effort you put in, the hard work. The practices that you may change might yield some good gains but inspectors don't see that. This is one good reason for all these teachers leaving these schools...searching for more homogeneous ones.

The fear of failure was particularly intense and debilitating for teachers, where a mistake can mean losing credit necessary for promotion. Teachers were expected to be competent, make things happen, and get things done despite the difficulties that they might be facing. Christina was familiar about teachers' perceptions. When she was asked about how she tried to resolve these issues she said that:

I tried to create a school to which teachers want to belong. However, teachers do not feel psychologically safe in these schools. They are afraid that they might be judged as incompetent if they fail. Even those brave ones who work hard; they also have preferences. They prefer the easy road; they prefer disciplined students; they like homogeneous classrooms without having to differentiate teaching every day; they like going home not tired, but diverse classrooms require hard work.

Christina tried to create a world to which people want to belong; a world where teachers' values and those of the school mesh. However, teachers

were not willing to contribute to something larger than themselves. Christina gave all sorts of reasons, including complexity, lack of psychological safety and fear of failure. After this period the school started to experience increased central control by the principal and a heightened orientation towards compliance.

#### **4.4.2 The Consequences of a Top-Down, Fast-Paced Leadership Style**

Christina's leadership style could be described as heavy-handed and fast-paced. Most decision-making procedures went through her hands and she often had no intention of collaborating with teachers. She was not interested in incrementalism. The teacher noted that Christina wanted changes, which she directed centrally and implemented quickly:

When she arrived at the school, everyone was working non-stop. She turned the school upside down in only a few weeks. The only mistake, which we all noticed at the beginning, is that her way is the only way to do things in this school. It matters not how well you teach, or how much effort you might think you are putting in but how good you are as a team player.

Most of Christina's practices were small changes that had to take place quickly. This kept teachers' morale low at all times. Teachers wanted respect, and they wanted to see actual changes. In her discussions with parents, Christina reminds one of a command-and-control method rather than consensus. The excuse she gave was that she had to convince teachers that she was serious about change.

#### **4.4.3 Stereotypes and Expectations**

Steele and Aronson (1998) illustrate that educators have deeply embedded stereotypes that connect racial identity to academic ability, and children become aware of these stereotypes as they grow up in the school context. At Nestor these strong assumptions that 'students who come from European countries do better in school than Asian-Arabic students' were a reality. The assistant principal

explained that these kinds of stereotypes affect both teachers' expectations of students and students' expectations of themselves. The assistant principal described how powerful a stereotype can become in influencing what people see and expect of students:

We make generalisations too fast. Some of our European students do well indeed, but the majority do not. We see that, and say ok they are doing better than Asian students. We regard that small number of European students who are achieving well the norm and those who are achieving bad as the exception.

Beyond stereotypes, the sorting practices that seemed to be taking place at the school also sent important messages to students about the meaning of racial categories. The vice-principal said that students notice that the students who are most likely to be punished are the minority students, and students often draw conclusions about the relationship between race and academic ability based on these patterns. This hidden kind of curriculum related to race presented racial patterns as normal and effectively reinforced racial stereotypes. Schools therefore need to re-think their concept of diversity and recognise them as students with individual differences rather than as problematic students. Nestor achieved this by exploring the mission of the school and its current activities and then helping it integrate diversity into existing work. Treating diversity work separate from everyday practices was not effective.

The teacher noted that she makes the sitting arrangements in the classroom to make sure that students are not segregating themselves by sitting in racially defined groups in the classroom. She noted:

if students are allowed to choose they will be more likely to choose those who are more similar to them. I want students to work together, and this is one way to form relationships naturally. This is one way to break racial attitudes. Familiarity with the other is everything in this school.

The principal also noted that the school celebrates difference in school programmes while teachers encouraged students to pursue things that are not traditionally associated with members of the groups. When minority students were encouraged by adults to join discussions, to play music in the school band or even play in the school theatre, it was possible for greater numbers to challenge racial norms. Extracurricular activities have also been reported to play a major part in the schools' success. They gave minority students the chance to get to know each other in situations that are not racially loaded.

While the majority of European students were achieving high grades, there was a small group of students who came from other countries whom 'you don't predict that they will do well but in the end, can do even better' (Vice-principal). The problem was that only few teachers will report Asian students doing well even if there is a small portion of those students scoring higher than the rest. Educators failed to consciously undermine and work against these kinds of stereotypes, as they often acted on them unconsciously. Their assumptions were so deeply entrenched that was virtually impossible to hold them unless they took conscious and deliberate action. When the principal was asked why teachers refuse to change these deeply held perceptions about students, the principal noted that teachers remain embedded in a culture of complacency. Although they knew that they have to learn to push children and not wait for something desperate to happen, according to the principal:

Teachers are waiting for something really desperate to happen to enable them to act...discussions relating minority students come only when a fight between different groups of students comes up.

The principal noted that one of the reasons for teachers feeling this way is that 'teachers feel punished for being promoted in such schools'. Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning became influenced by the context of the schools in



which they taught. The principal commented on the government's recent efforts to compensate teachers who go and work in diverse settings:

The government has recently announced that it will increase the salaries of teachers who come to work in these schools. This is an effort to make teachers want to stay longer in the school. We see that only good students pursue a career and education and this is because Cyprus pays teachers a lot compared to other professions. However, this is not enough. Teachers need more incentives and need to be well trained to work in these settings.

Teachers' attitudes, expectations and perceptions about their own students' abilities influenced teachers' actions. Teachers who believed that certain children are incapable of learning were less likely to provide them stimulating tasks that improve their learning. In contrast, the teacher being interviewed noted that she likes taking personal responsibility for her students. She not only held high expectations but she also recognised that despite language barriers these students can actually learn.

Christina noted that parents in the community worked multiple jobs and often lived in shared, cramped quarters. Many students left school in the afternoon to join parents and work with them. As Christina noted:

In the first years, when minority students first arrived in schools, they looked at how their Cypriot classmates lived – in luxury – and could not accept it. Now things are slightly better as their parents earn more money and have also gained some social status in our society and students are not that envious of our students.

The school was previously the place where children from high socio-economic status families attended. Today the number of minority students that attend the school have made it an unattractive place to send a child. The presence of extremely limited resources required teachers and leaders to adopt new

approaches if they wanted to raise achievement. Teachers who taught children from backgrounds of poverty failed to see themselves as agents of change – people who can make a difference in the lives of children.

#### **4.4.4 Beyond Being ‘Caring’**

It would be wrong to suggest that teachers and principals were not caring towards their students and sympathetic at Nestor. As the principal noted: ‘children are shown lots of love and affection in this school’. Again, this is problematic because caring for students of colour must go beyond being ‘nice’ to them. Being warm, friendly and helpful does not put an end to the institutional barriers that students’ encounter as members of minority groups.

Moreover, when considering achievement goals, these feelings did not seem to equate with having high expectations and rigorous standards. As the teacher noted:

Everyone is kind to these children and their parents. However, for these kids it’s not only kindness that counts or being nice to them....there is a clear absence of rigorous teaching standards. Not only they are falling behind due to language difficulties, we are wasting precious time needed to get them on track with other students. Because they are so underserved and continue being underserved for years now, these kids don’t have time to waste.

A teacher noted that children sit in the class ‘doing absolutely nothing because they can’t understand a word of what I am saying and there is nothing more you can do about it’. This is a perfect example of a teacher experiencing guilt and frustration about their role as a teacher in an unequally caring structure. Teachers were frequently found reaffirming their sense of being a nice person who is trying to help these students. The consequences of these feelings on children’s education are tragic. ‘Caring’ teachers and principals seemed to expect less of their students and they were making allowances for the students’ difficult home

life, poverty, or lack of Greek-language proficiency. A sense of urgency to solve the problem of minority students' underachievement was lacking. As a result, failure could be predicted with a great deal of consistency. Because the educational system could not show any substantive type of systematic approach to raising the level of education of minority students, teachers felt relaxed with their views of 'you can't do much about these children'.

The education system, however, was not the only one to blame. As the school culture says 'you can't do much', definition of problems becomes less frequent and people collectively assume less responsibility for the system's failures and as a result set fewer goals. However, teachers at Nestor defended rigorous standards. They felt that the standards were too hard for students to reach and too hard for teachers to teach. One frequent argument was that not all children would attend universities; therefore the focus on rigorous standards was unnecessary for them. The aim was to 'teach students to read and write' (Teacher). The vice principal thought that 'students can read at a challenging level if they are provided with lots of support...however, the teacher cannot help every single child in the classroom...there is not enough time.' A further issue that preoccupied school staff was the teaching and learning inconsistency between school classes. As the teacher and principal explained:

Everyone is doing his or her own thing. The whole group delivery teaching is not working any more. We have to articulate content and instruction. This would clarify expectations or what should happen on a daily basis.  
(Teacher)

Everyone has different ways of handling mixed ability classes. These students must be removed from their classrooms for long periods of the day so they could receive targeted instruction. However, we need trained teachers to support these students. The school places not only the least capable but teachers who were just appointed. (Principal)

The teacher also strongly believed on the placement of discipline rules. The teacher highlighted both the magnitude and persistence of the problem in all schools regardless of whether there were minority students in the school or not.

The principal was not only concerned about teachers' caring relationships with students but she also tried to create opportunities for relationships to grow amongst the school. Despite her 'totalitarian' fast-paced leadership style Christina believed that relationships amongst teachers are as significant as those amongst leaders and between leaders and members.

Teachers stress a lot, not only when a new diverse student enters the classroom but generally. The principal then has to create good interpersonal relationships amongst school members. When colleagues share good relationships, then they are more likely to collaborate and learn from each other.

The findings suggest that interpersonal relationships are critical to forging the shared understandings, commitments and collaborative action. Granovetter (1973) identified two kinds of relationships to which one commits, namely strong ties and weak ties. He argues that strong ties facilitate trust, motivation and commitment whereas weak ties broaden access to salient information, skills and learning (Granovetter, 1973). In a later article by Granovetter (2005), he emphasises the strength of weak ties asserting 'moving in different circles from ours, they connect us to a wider world. They may therefore be better sources when we need to go beyond what our own group knows, as in finding a new job or obtaining a scarce service' (p. 34). A combination of strong and weak ties with different groups could be strong foundations for diverse schools.

### **4.4.5 Paying Attention to Race and Difference**

Students seemed to be rewarded or punished by the simple fact of belonging to a particular racialised group, regardless of their individual merits or faults. For instance, the vice principal claimed that 'parents refused to talk to their children

in Greek at home'. In addition, students' unique assets were often misinterpreted as a problem for the classroom. As a result teachers often labeled students as unmotivated, withdrawn, or academically incapable. Teachers noted that their students do not feel as if they were part of the school or the classroom; they spoke of feeling invisible and of being treated as if they were less worthy than other students. Participants believed that educators fail to bring issues of race on the table. Only when a safe climate for discussion was created, a dialogue about race was opened up. People refused to take the kind of psychological risks they needed to take to explore these issues deeply unless they felt a sense of safety and confidentiality.

Paying attention to the cultural experience of students is becoming increasingly important given the differences between the demographics of Cypriot students and their teachers. It seems that the building up of differences dissolves when the sense of fear and separateness fades away. This is a matter of education and works on humans' understandings of others. However teachers note that 'in class we are following the curriculum. We are not talking whether people are white or black'. Racial blindness – the idea that ignoring or overlooking racial and ethnic differences promotes racial harmony – seems to have become the new racism. Teachers who enjoyed racial privilege were closing their eyes to the experiences of others. Some parents and teachers were not even aware of their own racial issues. As the principal reflected:

Parents claim that they are not racists but they don't want their children sitting next to minority students.

The school was frequently and unknowingly engaging in unintentional discrimination and oppression. Equitable, inclusive and socially just practices, as manifested in the behaviours of individuals and groups, are however critical aspects of a culturally competent and proficient school environment. Evidently, at Nestor school culture was suffering from a lack of awareness about racism.

#### **4.4.6 Conformity with the Status Quo**

According to Christina, as much as one celebrates diversity, homogeneous schools are easier to manage than heterogeneous schools. In homogeneous schools, teachers, students and parents from the same group can talk in code, 'immediately understand one another, and behave in a consistent, predictable manner' (Principal). This is one of the main reasons for people suggesting conformity; so that everyone subscribes to the same set of beliefs, style and values. It's like they want people to forget their background, their origins, their roots and become part of the mainstream culture. At Nestor educators seem to work on a set of edges between their own world and those of other people. They seemed get over these edges from time to time, so as to understand their own world more deeply. The example that the principal gave illustrates this. When she asked parents why they didn't enrol the children earlier (they were in the country for more than a year), a minority parent replied that in his country children go to school at the age of seven. It seemed to be logical to other people to delay enrolment. In other words there was an order to what seemed to the principal like chaos. These findings suggest that in appreciating other people's worlds one does not have to invade their privacy or 'mind-read' them, which can be condescending. These are destructive characteristics seen only in the most dysfunctional schools. According to the principal pressures for conformity do not achieve success. Instead, Nestor exhibited respectful negotiation. Differences were tolerated and conflicts were approached through negotiation, which respected the rights of others to feel, receive and respond differently.

Despite negotiation and efforts to develop equity and excellence, the school still existed in a challenging community and confronted an extraordinary density of human needs every day. Blaming student disengagement on disadvantaged communities where social capital was scarce and human needs were sometimes overwhelming has increased people's sense of powerlessness. As a result, they often became isolated; with no guidance in managing these contradictions and lacking the solidarity of a larger social movement, they became ineffectual.

Status quo as a result remained the same, and the leader an ineffective legitimator of it. There was actually nobody to raise the importance of non-conformity. The principal thought that leadership in such schools required large amounts of hope, because principals have to venture into uncharted territory, to be able to handle intellectual solitude and ambiguity. Unfortunately, Christina compromised because she saw that the amount of money that the schools were being provided did not make much difference to students' achievement. Her conformity, however, and her attempt to resist inequitable practices in her school left her feeling futile and stressed.

### **4.4.7 Educators do not Talk About the Individual Student**

The minority student did not seem to be constructed as an individual, but rather solely as the member of a group that she or he represented: The following excerpt illustrates the point well:

This student came to the school recently. He refuses to speak in Greek like the rest of his group members. (Teacher)

The essential link between the individual and the group was often taken for granted to the point that the principal omitted any explicit passage from the former to the latter. By doing so, the student became an undifferentiated part of the group of the 'disabled'. The student was not evaluated individually, but rather as the member of a group of other students. School stakeholders tended to compare 'us' and 'them' frequently in their answers. For example, 'their culture is very different from us', 'these people do not care as much as us about their children's education' and so on. The lack of interest of minority parents was perceived as a manifestation of their culture. It seemed that educators constructed diversity as a comparison between groups, where cultural difference is a deficiency in relation to an implicitly established norm.

#### 4.4.8 Resource Constraints

The government through the ZEP have dramatically changed the way resources are allocated to schools. Minority schools under the ZEP umbrella were receiving more resources. Whereas in the past the government had allocated resources equally across all schools, regardless of needs or performance, now more money and more time seemed essential if minority students were to meet the standards of white students. Despite the MOEC's movement into a differential resource allocation between schools according to the needs, it is still the MOEC that decides who gets what. According to school stakeholders, such an incremental, parochial mind-set affirms traditional pecking orders. They noted that if MOEC continues to control resources, it will continue to trumpet new ideas and monopolise discussions, thereby reinforcing the status quo. For example, school staff thought that a welcoming class would have helped students adapt and acquire the language efficiently. Interestingly, they also noted that the programmes that the school had introduced with the minimum amount of money that the MOEC had offered to the school had made little change:

The programme that the school introduced has not made any significant difference. There is a lack of real, meaningful support when it comes to these students. And minority students is only one of the many problems that the school currently faces. (Teacher)

It seems that the history of half-lived change programmes undermined the confidence that the current challenges would be treated any differently. The principal believed that even if the school had the resources, it would bring little influence to bear on a student's achievement because of minority students' disadvantaged backgrounds. As the principal noted:

No matter how much money the MOEC puts in, school funding will not make much difference in students' achievement.

Although the school was not in the ZEP, Christina had mixed views concerning



the money resources available to the school. She viewed money as unnecessary when compared with cultural deficit views (lack of parent involvement) On the other hand the teacher viewed money as a crucial factor in increasing time and support for students. As a teacher noted:

There is not enough money...however even if we had, it is up to the school to take advantage of it. ZEP schools require principals who are incredibly creative with the budget.

While school required more funding, the school principal pointed to the availability of external partnerships that could help the school overcome some funding difficulties. Thus Christina increased the allocation, autonomy and adequacy of the school budget by considering external funds and partnerships. However, school faculty noted that the school needed much more funding in regards to minority students. Christina continues to find resource generation procedures as time consuming and complicated, as fund approval goes through many control stages, a mass of administrative/bureaucratic procedures, and subsequent involvement of a great number of officials. Evidently, lack of resources to address the needs of students from various cultures was a major problem at Nestor.

### **4.4.9 Leadership Development**

According to Christina training comes too late, as the MOEC should aim to provide preparation prior to taking over a school leadership position or even before applying for it. She also noted that an induction phase to support the leader in his or her new position after taking over a leadership position would be the ideal. She further explained that:

Leadership for equity should be one of the core competencies included in the mandatory training and orientation of new principals. The MOEC needs to understand that effectively leading and developing principals is an integral part of what it means to lead in such schools.

She also noted that the leadership training theories present in the current programme do not apply throughout the system and that not many people are committed to it or truly believe in it. Nevertheless the principal noted that leadership is learned on the job, enhanced by a variety of experiences and challenges. The principal found it logical to ensure that managers get the best experience possible prior to working in diverse schools. She noted:

‘I didn’t find sitting in classrooms Friday afternoons and listening to a lecture very helpful. That’s not how we learn. Theory is good but you need to discuss and practise that theory after those lectures are over.’ Principals lack the knowledge of what really happens in schools. They don’t get to see what really occurs in schools and what it really takes to become an effective leader. They need to constantly connect what they have learned in classrooms and the real world.

### **4.5 Nestor’s Challenges**

The school at the time of the site visit was going through a period of stagnation in achievement and a sense of being overwhelmed. In fact, it was passing through a ‘time of crisis’ in which school faculty had to renew its commitment to changing established practices, to endure the uncertainty of high teacher turn-over, and to rethink the aspects of the school’s context that may have served as excuses for poor performance in the past. Christina was not sure what adjustment to make. She felt that she was doing her best work and it was not paying off in visible evidence of improving student performance. The school went into periods of frustration with no incremental changes or gains. What rendered this school as ineffective are considered below.

#### **4.5.1 Uncovering Values Driving Behaviour**

Christina constantly tried to create a school where everyone wants to belong.

However, the values driving the behaviour of teachers stood up against all her efforts. With the increasing immigration of students coming from other countries, teachers realised that they had to adapt their practices more in order to accommodate students' interests and needs. This has resulted instability in the teaching workforce as teachers only stayed in the schools for a short time. Schoolteachers did not want to stay in the school longer for two basic reasons. First, as has been already highlighted, teachers felt that teaching in diverse schools required a considerable amount of work. And second, these teachers felt that teaching in diverse classrooms involved a risk. They believed that teachers who work in diverse classrooms receive a low rating from inspectors.

Teachers' interests and values were clearly getting in the way of her leadership initiatives. Christina ended up saying: 'those teachers who are sabotaging my initiatives just want to make sure they want their good rankings and promotion.' Teachers' desire to satisfy their own interests seemed to have caused them to create situations that contributed to leadership derailment. In contrast to Nestor, the rest of the three schools, leaders and teachers have tried various ways in tackling these issues. In these schools leaders and followers worked at understanding themselves, the positive and negative parts of their personalities, and being open to all forms of information and feedback. Additionally, leaders in the other three schools were more responsive to teachers' needs.. At Athena for example, Marcos was constantly giving teachers opportunities to learn. At Ares, Christopher was aware of the emotional needs of the teachers and accommodated them. At Leander, Elpida helped teachers become leaders in their own right. But most importantly, these leaders had the abilities to preserve their own hold on reality, to see things as they were, avoiding the intense pressure from those around them to participate in these actions.

In mobilising stakeholders to engage with change initiatives, Christina also refused to think about the strong connection between her initiative (i.e. towards diversity) and their values (i.e. working in a school environment without challenges and risks to their teacher career). I would suggest that change process

demands a mix of diverse individuals with regards to talents and perspectives. The challenge is to integrate the individual differences and values and mobilise them in pursuit of the common purpose. Findings suggest that teachers will only take the risk necessary to share their talents with others when they feel psychologically safe, and safety comes from knowing they are part of a community of like-minded people with regard to purpose and values. It is what energises the group, and more important, keeps its group members committed to common welfare. Consequently, Christina's failure lay on the fact that she failed to intensify her efforts to make sure that her diversity purpose spoke to the loftiest aspirations of her people.

### **4.5.2 Cultural Differences**

School stakeholders assumed that students do not achieve well in school because of family disorganisation, poverty and other intellectual and cultural deficit that these students experience during their first years of life. These students were required to make major changes in their behaviours. At Nestor, teachers ignored the cultures that students bring to school and assumed that low-income and minority children are culturally deprived. In contrast, in other school teachers believed that ethnic groups have strong, rich and diverse cultures. They believed that minority students fail to achieve in school not because they have deprived cultures but because their cultures are different from the school culture. In contrast to Nestor, teachers at the rest of the schools also talked about different kind of teaching strategies that could help minority students to achieve at higher levels.

### **4.5.3 Lack of Resources**

Schools within the ZEP enjoyed a number of advantages that Nestor did not. The school lacked the flexibility to design programmes and interventions because of lack of resources. According to the principal the school's lack of resources affected students' achievement and progress. The school was short of teachers that would make an extra class for minority students' second language needs and

afternoon programme. The school also had a higher-class size than the rest of the schools, which were in a better position to provide a more personalised class setting, as the teacher-pupil ratio was lower.

Although Christina stressed the scarcity of opportunities and the availability of resources as critical factors in improving student achievement, she also seemed to have doubts as to whether school finances would make much difference to the educational achievement of these students. She wondered whether additional resources would have played a major role in producing better-educated students even when these resources were present. She believed that race, parent education and income are the major predictors of learning; hence, greater investments would not make much difference to those who (implicitly) cannot take advantage of them. In other words the effects of poverty drive disparities in achievement and not unequal resources. These findings are in contrast with the rest of the case studies that have documented how resources including smaller class sizes, better quality teachers and various support systems for students and afternoon programmes have contributed to student achievement gains in their schools. Additionally, principals in these schools took advantage of every opportunity to make an impact on students' achievement.

Additionally, MOEC's refusal to send more resources to the school, has contributed to resistance amongst school faculty. In fact, the principal felt that the school has not been treated 'fairly' in terms of distribution and allocation of resources. These outcomes have yielded various responses including lower work quality, less cooperation and loss of trust. Thus the fact that the school was offering low support on minority students has been found to lead to lower work motivation and commitment. The practices that Elpida undertook have not managed to restore trust and bring about change.

### **4.5.4 Establishing Legitimacy**

Elpida contributed to the occurrence of resistance through communication

breakdowns such as failing to legitimise change. In legitimising change, as it was seen in other case studies, involved conversations, collective purpose, dialogue and so on. Elpida has failed to provide justifications that establish the appropriateness and rationality of change adoption, create readiness for change, and increase not only the likelihood of teachers acceptance and participation in the change process but also the speed and extent of that acceptance. For example, as it was seen teachers' acceptance and participation in the initial stages of Elpida's change initiatives depended on the likelihood that the change will lead to personal and organisational benefits. However, teachers' wish for a transfer in another school revealed a lack of commitment in working in diverse schools. Thus, teachers were more likely to scrutinise Elpida's proposed changes by questioning and evaluating her changes in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Whereas other principals had strong, well-developed supporting justifications for change initiatives, Elpida's were weak ones and they were rejected. Additionally, by dismissing this scrutiny as resistance, Elpida missed the opportunity to provide compelling justifications to help her teachers make the necessary assessments required to support change but also increase the risk on inoculating recipients against future change.

#### **4.5.4 Leadership style**

As Nestor maintained a tight bureaucracy and reinforced a top-down leadership style, it created a climate of top-down decision making that stifled innovation and personal initiative taking. It also reinforced the notion that the 'leader' is more capable and competent than followers, and provided little opportunity for teachers to make a substantial contribution to organisational processes. However, teachers also maintained passive behaviours. In particular they had experienced a high degree of fit in this type of context given their existing belief that followers should be obedient and deferent in nature and ascribe to the power and status differences created. Thus, apart from the fact that the school reinforced status hierarchies, followers remained inactive and 'satisfied' with their school. In contrast, in other schools empowering climates blurred the lines between leaders

and followers and encouraged constructions of followership that were more participative in nature. These schools established climates of empowerment and autonomy, and their leaders provided opportunities for teachers to be proactive, get involved in decision making, and, in some cases, engage in leadership-type behaviours.

## **4.6 Similarities and Differences**

Table 20 below illustrates the similarities and differences between the principals taking into account the school context.

**TABLE 4.1: Leadership Similarities and Differences Across the Four Schools**

## **SIMILARITIES**

### **Self-Awareness**

School leaders were found to identify accurately personal strengths and areas of development. They demonstrated integrity by acting in manner than consistently reflected stated values and beliefs.

### **Institutionalising Values**

Principals compensated uncertainty by identifying and institutionalising the school with purpose and values that provided rationale beyond the transactions or activities of the moment. Stakeholders communicated their values by words and deeds. Grappling diversity issues for Marcos was difficult, both as he managed himself and as he set the context for others. As diversity challenges often require new ways of working, it was fundamental that leaders made changes to his values, beliefs habits, or ways of life. Despite the effects of MOEC's prescribed goals and purposes on organisational context, school leaders transmitted values through conversations about higher purpose.

### **Respect for Difference**

Schools built and maintained safe, fair and respectful learning environments that celebrated the diversity of the student population. They also developed consciousness about others, noting the things that are important to other people. School leaders believed that interaction with diverse groups depended on the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another. As minority students struggled with



myriad social and educational inequities, school leaders also tried to open the school to the larger community by organising field trips and by allowing individual differences and identities to surface at various school events.

### **Building Relationships**

Relational work was foundational in developing equity and excellence. Relationships were critical in forging shared understandings, commitments and collaborative action. They were also important in discovering common interests of which they were unaware. Emphasis was also given to strong interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

### **Understanding Students' Cultural Needs**

The major element of the educational policy developed with regard to immigrant children remains teaching the language of the host country. School leaders and teachers working with minority students simultaneously assumed the roles of language teachers as that of cultural brokers. They noted that teachers who teach students oral and written language could also help students understand the new culture. However, as it was highlighted at Nestor more efforts are needed in accepting and understanding diversity.

### **Collective Leadership**

Leadership was the collective achievement of the school faculty emerging from the actions of all stakeholders, rather than the property of the principal. This type of leadership was essential given the demographic characteristics of the school. In all four schools, encouraging the involvement of followers in a collective process reduced anxiety, since it built group support. The

participative process also encouraged open communication not only among followers but also between the leader and his or her followers.

### **Commitment to Professional Learning**

There was a commitment to ongoing professional learning. School faculty demonstrated humility and willingness to continually improve. Principals monitored teaching and learning by offering feedback and support. They have developed a school environment in which teachers were constantly learning with one another about how to solve problems. Teachers engaged in collaborative processes to set rigorous goals for improvement, and developed plans and time frames for reaching those goals. A culture, supportive of learning and innovation was built in all four schools despite the conservative organisation cultures (which are often the result of past successes by leaders) that characterise Cypriot schools.

### **Mobilising Adults to Take Action**

In practicing leadership in diverse schools, school leaders made various interventions. These interventions pointed to long-term solutions. Interventions included embedded communication, acting politically and fighting complacency. School leaders possessed the necessary verbal skills to communicate with clarity, conscientiousness and appropriateness to diverse groups. Leaders also acted politically in order to understand the relationship and concerns of diverse groups. In fighting complacency school faculty worked proactively to solve problems and reach effective solutions.

### **Focus on Social Identity**

The school made sure that everyone feels included and has a voice around the work. The creation of neutral zones where social interaction was person-based rather than identity group-based was essential in this process. Leaders were aware of group differences and preferences. Group distinctiveness from the part of minority students and their parents differed significantly from those of their counterparts. Greek-Cypriots were motivated to protect their collective identity, whereas minority groups were motivated to enhance the collective identity of their group.

### **Leadership Development**

Leaders believed that integration of theory and practice was essential in successful leadership development programmes. According to school faculty selection criteria of school principals need to be revised. Diverse schools require principals who are energetic, committed, capable and passionate in working in challenging school environments.

### **Bureaucracy Constraints**

Leadership practices were heavily constrained by the hierarchical educational system of Cyprus. Bureaucracy prescribed, managed and controlled the work of all stakeholders.

## **DIFFERENCES**

### **High-Quality Education**

Quality education differed in all four schools. At Athena, despite curriculum differentiation, high-achievers lacked challenging curriculum material. The principal advocated the growing role of technology in education. He noted the critical importance of

technologies in progressive and pedagogical ways. At Ares, teachers were concerned that the principal's main attention focused on 'whether students felt well and not on academic achievement per cent'. The school concentrated on factors such as dispute resolution and conflict at the expense of rigorous standards. Absence of standardised instruction and broad and engaged curriculum presented many problems to the school leader and faculty. Teachers stressed the importance of meeting students' academic deficits. At Nestor, teachers felt punished working in the particular school and resisted change. They spent a considerable amount of time disciplining students instead of aiming for high quality-instruction.

### **Knowledge of Teaching and Learning**

As curriculum guides were non-existent, teaching varied widely in content, rigor and instruction. And because teachers were autonomous in selecting teaching materials, there was no system wide focus or consistency.

### **Teacher Expectations**

Teacher expectations in each school differed considerably. Not all stakeholders believed that every child could excel academically. Some teachers used to take more personal responsibility for ensuring high academic achievement for every child than others. At Nestor, for example, teachers underestimated the potential of minority students. Such falsehoods propped out an inequitable social hierarchy with minorities disproportionately represented at the bottom, and they absolved schools of their fundamental responsibility to educate all children, no matter how deprived. In contrast, at Athena excellence was expected from every student. The faculty consistently spread high expectations to students and their parents. Ares demonstrated the personal drive and commitment to eliminate disparity of educational quality that exists.

### **Type of followers**

Schools differed in their composition of effective and ineffective followers. Some principals noted that some teachers observe but do not participate in diversity challenges. They make a deliberate decision to stand aside and to disengage from school problems. On the other hand, leaders have noted that their teachers are eager, energetic and engaged. They heavily invest in people and they work hard. But most importantly effective followers showed that they can and do find ways of being heard despite their lack of power and authority.

### **Dealing with Conflict**

Leaders applied different ways in dealing with conflict. At Leander, the principal believed that bringing similar groups together was beneficial as it gave them the opportunity to discuss their experiences and anxieties. Similarly, at Athena the principal believed that conflict could not be hidden or ignored, but rather it could be acknowledged and made to work for the school. At Ares however conflict was hidden especially when conflict involved Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. In particular, the principal believed that conflict brought more conflict and therefore the school constantly tried to eliminate it.

### **Community Involvement**

Each school's relationship with parents and the rest of the community differed significantly. While some principals struggled to communicate performance results to parents, other principals have managed to help parents understand their students' data so they could support their work at home and by sending them to extra tutoring sessions offered. For example, Leander integrated afternoon homework sessions in its school programme. Parents could participate in these afternoon sessions. In contrast, Christopher tried to give parents a sense of ownership in the school's change processes and reforms. He wanted parents to have

everyone play a part in leadership and in problem resolution. In contrast, the rest of the schools failed to initiate and maintain consistent communication and develop constructive partnerships with families, community members and agencies to build on their strengths and recognise them as co-educators.

### **Monitoring and Assessment of Progress**

The schools used different assessment tools and strategies to gather data to monitor student mastery of instructional content, to improve instruction and to assess the comparative performance of subgroups within the classroom.

### **School Composition**

School stakeholders in predominantly diverse schools dealt with overly demanding work, which led them to experience intense and enduring pain. However, in these schools developing equity and excellence was a central commitment. In other less diverse schools, teachers were left without reliable opportunities to deal with diversity problems due to schools' limited capacity to acknowledge and respond to them. Diverse schools were busy and preoccupied with other concerns and they were often unable to notice the pain and concerns of teachers facing diversity challenges. These findings suggest that cultural differences between the two types of schools could determine the effectiveness of leadership within them.

### **Resource constraints**

The schools lacked the necessary resources that were needed to raise student achievement. The principal at Nestor for example became significantly more directive. In schools where resources were more readily available, leaders felt that they had relatively more power and the schools demonstrated leadership stability.

## **4.7 Summary**

This chapter presented the four schools selected for the purposes of the present study. Against all odds, the four schools have put great effort into developing equity and excellence. Although the extent to which they moved towards equity and excellence varied, they all leveraged their capabilities and competencies in order to transform their schools. As there were great variations between schools a cross-case analysis was conducted. It was seen as valuable to compare the cases systematically to see what this sample of incidents can tell in terms of factors that are present in all the cases, those that are present in some cases and not others, and those that are entirely absent. Through such activities I can sum up this small number of complex cases into a more coherent pattern of understanding. Thus, the themes from cross case analysis are organised in the next two chapters. The next chapter, which relates to research question one, identifies the six leadership practices that are integral and unique in developing equity and excellence in diverse schools. And the following chapter, which relates to research question two, describes how to best prepare principals to lead such schools.

## CHAPTER

### 5

# **Six Leadership Practices for Pursuing Equity and Excellence**

This chapter relates to the first research question, and thus reflects on the leadership practices demonstrated by the four schools in the processes of transforming their schools towards excellence and equity. Although leadership work in these four schools differs, some important commonalities exist across these schools – commonalities of approach and best practice. It is by examining the leadership practices within the four schools, exploring and exposing commonalities – and some important differences – that important lessons emerge, lessons for practitioners and school leaders in all types and levels of schools and for policy makers who seek to improve the education of all children.

To foster real change and development in these schools, both the leader and the organisational culture must take a different leadership stance. Through cross-case analysis six key leadership practices that leaders must engage in were identified: change of mind-sets; change of values; change of social purpose; qualities of successful schools; leadership interventions; social identity; The model I present here describes the practices that leaders employ in leading their schools towards success.

In studying these schools, I have found that they shared six common aspects of successful leadership practices focused in developing equity and excellence:

1. *Recognise priorities:* The most important problems of resistance to change



stem from the critical gap between what is required in diverse schools and leader's own level of development. Leaders need to reach a higher level of mental complexity in order to close this gap.

2. *Stand on values and social purpose:* Often, the gap between a person's espoused values and his or her behaviour is troubling. Findings revealed the need for principals to acknowledge the contradiction between their espoused, shared values of equity and the reality of intolerance and racism in the school environment.
3. *Exceed authorisers and engage followers:* Schools committed to equity and excellence share certain qualities that make them distinguishable, adaptive and responsive to diversity challenges. In these schools complacency is avoided, authority is exceeded, and followers are highly involved.
4. *Intervene and take action:* Interventions are necessary in practising equity and excellence and are designed to help people in the system address diversity challenges.
5. *Involve social identity issues:* As difference can become the basis for ranking of superiority and inferiority, identities, whether of individuals, groups, or organisations play a central role in making differences salient or not. Thus, identity work involves shaping awareness and action both in terms of acknowledging difference and finding points of commonality.
6. *Pursue excellence:* Beyond managing identity and conflict, school leaders in diverse schools must create the necessary conditions for quality teaching and learning.

Below I describe these leadership practices outlined above in more detail.

## 5.1 Recognise Priorities

The educators working in diverse schools were constantly experiencing a mismatch between the world's complexity and their own. Some chose to deal with complexities by trying to reduce them while others struggled to increase their own complexity. For example, at Leander, Christina was often tempted to decide quickly in order to reduce complexities around diversity issues rather than to use them as a learning experience. The impulse to get things taken care of quickly was hard to resist and required a good measure of emotional maturity to resist such impulses. Instead, more successful leaders tried gaining perspectives by engaging in dialogue, giving the work back to the people, and protecting voices from below.

These findings suggest that dealing and coping are not the appropriate means to fight diversity. Those who tried to cope and deal with diversity challenges remained highly unsuccessful because coping and dealing entails the addition of new skills, which is very different from development. Therefore, an educator who learned to cope with diversity is the same person before he learned to cope. In order to create the new knowledge and skills to address diversity, their current mind-sets underwent change. More specifically principals who engaged in organisational change required the legitimization of new assumptions and perspectives in relation to existing norms, beliefs and values. These findings suggest that transformation is different from learning new information or skills. New information may add to the things a person knows, but transformation changes the way he or she knows those things. Those involved in diversity initiatives had to work in new ways, often making fundamental changes to their values, beliefs, habits and ways of working. In turn, by changing mind-sets principals created a sense of shared interests, which was crucial to the process of building alliances and bridging differences. For example, at Athena, the principal noted that shaping how people understand themselves and their work is critical in identifying with others and understanding others' goals. In particular, the principal was highly self aware and started viewing students' problems as his

problems. Educators that framed their issues in such a way that it resonated with the needs of other individuals were most successful.

The results indicate that in engaging with diversity work they understood themselves well in their full complexity, multiplicity and inconsistency. As Hannah, Woolfolk and Lord (2009) state:

diverse demands not only challenge the breadth of knowledge and skill possessed by a leader but also test the adaptability and flexibility of his/her very sense of self, how leaders conceptualise themselves in relation to the multiple social roles they must perform. (p.169)

In a similar vein, to overcome organisational demands and conflicts and to positively influence followers, leaders' meaning-making system in the current research was highly complex, and imbued with a panoply of values and self-beliefs. Role identities were important but principals were often made up of several role identities and not always clear or consistent in their values, beliefs, and principles. To lead equity and excellence, leaders recognised and changed some of their own priorities, loyalties and competencies as they developed a set of responses and relationships that enabled them to thrive anew collectively in the face of external challenges.

The results of cross-case analyses also offered some interesting insights on principals' transformations. In the process of changing their deeply held beliefs, leaders inevitably experienced feelings of 'loss'. For example, Christopher was afraid of losing those deeply held beliefs, which related back to the loss of family members in the 1974 invasion. Principals resisted change because they were afraid of losing those deeply held beliefs which they and their families cared about most. In contrast, they embraced change when they anticipated a clear net benefit. For example, at Leander the school principal tried to change school values so that they were consistent with those of the community if they were to involve more parents in their students' education. The change involved value

alternation and the net benefit was parent involvement. Unfortunately, principals were more likely to experience loss rather than benefit when they were trying to change for equity and excellence. This is because majority group members wanted to preserve a system that advantaged them and not others, preserved their group distinctiveness and promoted their group dominant values and characteristics. On the other side of the coin were the motivations of minority group members who wished to enhance their status, both collectively (i.e. social action) and individually (i.e. individual mobility).

As was illustrated earlier, when Christopher went to work at Ares he could hear the support of his family and friends urging him to be loyal to his 'Cypriot values' and reminding him of what Turkish people had done to their family. However, children's compassionate behaviour and affection saved him from the tension and guilt between his ancestors and his community. His identification with other students cast a shadow on his sense of self and in some ways his response towards these children. Eventually, various events of self-reflection caused him to begin expanding his definition of himself to include qualities such as competent educator. Seeing himself in this more complex way gave him the confidence to change attitudes and imagine a new set of possibilities for himself. Changing their minds and beliefs was important because they were often unaware of how their expectations and underlying assumptions affected their actions. As was revealed, it was not until Christopher became aware of the limiting or distorted beliefs that framed his behaviours that he began to change his intended goals successfully.

Although Christopher still feels guilty occasionally, he has managed to prioritise his loyalties and values. This interesting finding emphasises that one does not have to change completely or experience a great loss to meet diversity challenges and conflict. Success does not result from a zero-based, ahistorical approach. If some parts of people's identities are not conserved, individuals would not bare the emotions associated with those losses. This is often because deep changes disturb individual identity, which is anchored in past and current culture-specific

values.

Principals also suggested that accommodating diverse students in the school involved diversion of attention, asking teachers to differentiate instruction, greater efforts to involve the community, communication difficulties, and so on. Principals chose not to displace their responsibilities but rather tackle only the aspects of the problem that fitted their competence and their current state of mind-set complexity, such as jumping to solutions without adequate diagnosis, blaming authority, scapegoating, personalising the issues, and externalising the enemy. A key example of this was teachers' low expectations towards minority students at Nestor. They blamed the parents and their culture but never wondered about 'what is wrong with us as adults?'.

Through time, it would seem that principals' meaning-making system became more complex and they were more able to deal with multiple demands and uncertainty. Greater self-complexity also allowed the principals to interpret social behaviour in a multidimensional way and to guide behaviour accordingly. In particular, they operated with great flexibility and realised that there is no single approach that must be obeyed. For example, they may have required empathy and compassion in one situational role and persistence and vitality in another. For instance, at Ares at times the principal was found showing emotions such as empathy towards students while at other times could be found determined on taking initiatives and abhorring teachers' passivity. These findings are consistent with Fink's (2009) note that leaders:

have the ability to shape events...as opposed to being shaped by circumstances. To embrace this ability, leaders must embrace and employ all of their qualities – reason, ethics, common sense, imagination, intuition, and memory – in equilibrium. (p.62)

To do equitable education with depth, principals in this research managed to increase their own knowledge base, which helped them recognise priorities in the

divides among and between students and teachers who differed by race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.

### **5.1.1 Self-Concept Clarity**

To be effective leaders in such schools, principals knew themselves well in order to be able to draw from a combination of self-beliefs. The literature suggests this as well. Palmer (1998) asserts that 'the most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us' (p. 5). In a similar vein Crawford (2009) argues that 'knowledge of emotion is helpful to the leader, despite the complexities that are involved in understanding different approaches that exist' (p. 132). I am also suggesting that the clarity that leaders have is a critical factor in being able to activate needed self-beliefs in diversity situations. Principals' self-beliefs allowed them not only to see and explain school inequalities but also how to be critical and justice-oriented leaders.

Recognising how to prioritise self-beliefs was also found to be an essential step towards equity and excellence. For instance, when Elpida started working in the school, she quickly saw teachers' ignorance of basic equitable educational practices and behaviours that did not support students' integration or learning. Yet she found herself tolerating her teachers' behaviour, which undermined the goals that she set out for the school. Moreover, culture and norms are hard to change and they were all well developed before she took charge of the school. Elpida was pulled in two different directions and she had to decide which one was most important for the school. Elpida had to decide whether to remain pulled by her strong mission to make a multicultural school that would benefit all students or pull against that and remain in agreement with her staff. Pulling against would bring practical advantages such as less conflict and uncertainty, and managing the school using the old practices she used in a homogeneous school seemed easier to follow.

These protective patterns at Leander restored stability and made people feel less

stressful than facing the changes that adaptation would require. It was also the case, however, that people who followed this path avoided engaging in equitable practices and as a result engagement with other cultures was reduced. Although solutions to problems were given every day, they were not resolved for the long term. My analysis also indicated that defensive behaviours offered quick fixes and easy solutions to leaders. These reactions were often deliberate and provided strategic protection against the threat of change or they were unplanned, poorly monitored, or unconscious reactions. In contrast, those who dared to take the bold and realistic step in facing diversity challenges moved to a protective posture if the effort did not yield the desired results. From this, I would suggest that fears and values all interact and affect leaders' behaviours and decisions. Understanding their self-complexities can in turn help them make personal changes needed and later successfully lead the multicultural school.

Feelings also played a part in holding people back from diversity challenges. For example, Elpida was tolerating her staff behaviour because she knew that some people would be angry at her if she changed the system. People like stability and little conflict in their work environments. Elpida's deep, unexpressed feelings were getting in the way of the goals she was trying to accomplish. These unspeakable critical feelings are just as powerful as values, but they are not as apparent. They are part of being human and can contribute as forcefully as values to the ways one interacts with others. But, discovering what is holding leaders back is by its very nature an uncomfortable process. They are identifying and accepting responsibility for their role, which is getting in the way of the progress of the goal they are trying to achieve.

The data also highlighted the important role of integrity – defined as the consistency between words and actions – in leaders work. When leaders' knew what they stand for their followers understood them and their actions. In particular, high consistency between leader's words and actions helped followers develop trust and gave them a sense of certainty regarding the actions that the leader will take based on his or her words. Avolio et al. (2004) characterise

authentic leaders as

those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge and strengths. (p. 4)

I would suggest that a major component of leadership for equity is clarity of self-beliefs and values and integrity and could be the subject of further research.

## **5.2 Stand on Values**

Values played a central role in leadership practices, as recognised in the four schools. The work of diversity encouraged leaders to re-examine their values, learn about students' needs and challenges and use values as a strategic guidance system. More specifically, after examining their self-beliefs, these leaders associated themselves with societal values. I will discuss about how important these values can be when they are connected to social purpose. After outlining some of the advantages of the strategic uses of values, I will then turn to how principals transmit those values to people in the organisation so that they internalise and use them in practice.

### **5.2.1 The Importance of Values**

Different schools held different kinds of values. Nestor endorsed performance-oriented values such as quality and efficiency whereas the rest of the three schools espoused communal values, which emphasised the welfare and needs of students and their parents. In other words, while Nestor paid more attention to more technical issues, the rest were concerned with social purpose. In contrast, Marcos noted that school stakeholders had gone beyond technically efficient actions towards more meaningful ones in order to tackle diversity. Their meaningful actions involved undertakings which supported some ultimate end that each stakeholder personally valued. In other words, meaning was created when action was directed towards a broader ideal.



Having values connected to diversity work provided meaning to leaders and the rest of organisational life. A narrow focus on efficiency and technical problems prevented the schools from adapting effectively to change. In contrast, when principals let their staff know that they believe strongly in social purpose values and are willing to stand up for these beliefs, they earned credibility. In these schools, success stemmed from remaining true to values and using them to find opportunities to act on them. Through understanding of their purpose, they managed to make day-to-day decisions in the larger context. To develop equity and excellence, therefore, these leaders connected values with social purpose.

When school leaders brought society issues inside the school, the possibilities for success increased. Focusing on Greek-language proficiency alone, for example, did not seem to solve Cyprus's education problems. When Christopher looked closer to Turkish-Cypriot student needs he realised that they are worthy of attention, and that there is a room for improvement despite cultural and political conflicts. Similarly, Marcos's long-term efforts to see his students going to university boosted his motivation to focus on new solutions. They both cared about solving problems because problems were closely connected with their values. These principals took responsibility outside of their professional roles for making sure that effort is directed in thoughtful and potentially effective ways to achieve the outcomes that they considered to be priorities – social outcomes.

Evidence also suggests that leaders who connected their leadership practices with social purpose, they were inclined to search more broadly, see more opportunities, and generate more ideas. For example, Elpida reported spending a significant amount of time thinking about how to support the values through organisational structures and policies. These findings echoed a theme in the literature (Schein, 1985), in that principals have managed to build a culture filled with values.

Schools have also managed to go beyond the lists of values posted to them from MOEC, and used their own set of values as a strategic guidance system. Similarly, research by Pruzan (1998) shows that values are a critical management tool in the post-industrial economy, which is characterised by complex organisations inhabited by knowledge workers, for whom traditional hierarchical control systems are ineffective and counterproductive. In this sense the results of the current study showed that a clear sense of purpose can produce the next wave of activity. Even if a school attempted to copy the strategy of Athena without having the underlying values in place, it would not be able to compete with it.

### **5.2.2 The Strategic Use of Values**

In taking social action, leaders demonstrated their integrity, honesty, altruism and willingness to take risks with organisational resources. These leaders attempted to mesh school and social goals. The strategic use of social purpose and values in general provided a range of other advantages in diverse schools including the following:

- Having strong values made schools acknowledge the needs of multiple stakeholders and raised diversity consciousness. At Ares, the school principal tried to make people's connection to the school different but special in its own way. Thus value-building was based on bringing others on board.
- Values built rationale for thinking long term and in turn helped principals create continuity through time. Principal's actions and choices strongly related to the future of the school. The survival of the schools depended on the willingness and ability of its stakeholders to adjust in a coordinated fashion to solve diversity problems that threatened the existence of the school. In doing so they managed to build a personal culture of how things should be.
- In the context of these diverse schools, it also appeared that having a clear set of values promoted a common vocabulary and guidance for consistent

decisions. Clear articulation of purpose helped staff choose among alternatives in a consistent manner. For instance, at Athena, values coalesced as the school started to take shape, and it became clear which types of practices needed to be accorded highest priority. At this school, the processes and values became so powerful that it almost didn't matter which people got recruited to which school. In fact, Marcos was not as concerned about newly appointed teachers' capabilities as other principals were. His opinion about how employees should work and what the organisation's priorities need to be were so strong that teachers' capabilities did not matter to him as much as principals in other schools. The teacher at Athena, for example, referred to her 'school's philosophy' to point out her compatibility with the school's values. When first appointed to the school she was lacking the impetus to go and teach. However, the school's values acted as a magnet on her to a point that they affected her ability and motivation to work there. She also felt proud after being assigned a special diversity role within the school. It seems that as values and processes are being formed in the early and middle years, teachers begin to follow them by assumption rather than by conscious choice. Slowly these values and processes become to constitute the organisation's culture and are maintained through consistent set of successful practices and processes, which have developed over the years.

Values can have negative consequences when they are over-optimistic or when expectations cannot be met. The teacher at Leander noted that MOEC's goals require significant amounts of time and other resources to see significant improvements. She also noted that the creation of heightened expectations, which are difficult to fulfil, can cause disappointments. On the other hand, realistic societal purpose-oriented values, as was discussed, can bring fundamental changes.

### **5.2.3 Transmitting Values**

Although values were the foundation work of the schools being studied, the way principals used them and implemented them varied from school to school. One

challenge was having values and social purpose integrated and reflected in the strategy and in the decision-making processes. The consequences of values publicly espoused and not backed up by tangible actions or being fully integrated into the processes of organisations are indeed troubling. While schools had numerous statements of values – and many sound alike – only few garnered an advantage from them. Despite the frequency with which principals pointed to the values as guiding their choice or selling their ideas, the words themselves did not actually tell anyone what to do in any specific situation. In the worst situation, failing to reinforce the important connection between espoused core values and school activities often leads to cynicism and mistrust. At Nestor, the school principal espoused such values but the lack of resources did not lead to the results wanted and this created a culture of doubt.

Sosic and Jung (2010) suggest that ‘values provided a strong foundation that motivates people to achieve collective confidence and success, not just personal confidence and success’ (p. 85). Sosic and Jung’s assertions are consistent with my findings in that successful schools employed strategy as an important mechanism to align and direct behaviour that reflected the values of the school. A given strategy also acted to delegitimise the alternative dimensions along which progress has been made. In directing behaviour, the transmission of values also became an integral part of each school’s strategy. In these schools values were translated and transmitted through various communication process. Marcos constantly connected with his staff showing them that only social purpose, aspirations and principles can take the school forward. He also recognised how necessary it was to engage teachers in frank dialogue about diversity. These dialogues reflected the importance of communicating what is important for the school. Dialogues and other initiating actions did not only come from the top but from anywhere in the school. Conversations, dialogues and meetings disseminated values widely to all teachers and opened minds to diversity issues.

Oral transmission alone could not be effective if teachers did not agree with the school’s values. Because values create connectivity, an agreement was needed

between the top of the organisation and the rest of the organisation. Principals were very cognisant with the fact that the only way to build an enduring organisation was having teachers who embraced and owned the values. The fact that school values were congruent with their personal values inspired and motivated teachers. The case studies revealed that teachers who believed in the school's values also believed in the school's success. They were proud of their school success, which was owed to their shared purpose and values.

I would suggest that communication of values to teachers is equally important as communication of values to parents. Teachers and principals in some schools talked about school's values with parents and slowly they became engaged in conversations related to diversity even when they did not have to. However, in schools where poor communication channels of values and lack of affiliations with parents were obvious, values were more likely to have a negative impact and magnified response to the school's culture. As parents felt uncomfortable in schools, relationships between school staff and parents could not be established. At Leander, for example, it was found that minority parents have a desire to talk about diversity and difference issues, more than school stakeholders. In other words, minority groups members preferred conversations focused on diversity issues. Saguy, Dovidio and Pratto (2008) give one possible explanation for these findings. They note that minority group's members' desire to talk about differences was due to their greater motivation for a change in the power structure than majority group members. This research extends these findings and shows that schools can create and reinforce values through dialogues, conversations and discussions about diversity. Evidence suggests that schools that used values that engaged people put all stakeholders into open dialogues and provided them with conversations.

Another way that schools tried to make values a reality is by making them more visible and tangible. In some schools values appeared more frequently than in others. They appeared on the walls, in principals' offices, on posters, school calendars, etc. Such visible signs of values reminded people the way they should

behave and cooperate. Physical reminders of diversity values – such as paintings of different countries' flags and children of different colours holding hands on the walls – kept values alive. They also reminded stakeholders of the reasons they wanted to engage and lead for diversity. Other examples of physical reminders included a picture of different students of colour with an inspiring saying framed and put on the wall where it provided a constant presence. These results indicate the importance of giving purposes a concrete form so that people can get their arms around what principals mean. For instance, at Ares, sitting at the principal's office there were two large pictures. One consisted of a Greek-Cypriot priest awarding a Turkish boy and the other consisting of a Turkish-Cypriot priest congratulating a Greek girl. The images gave a visual form to the purpose that the principal committed himself to solve.

### **5.3 Exceed Authorisers and Engage Followers**

In this section I discuss certain qualities that schools shared in common, and how leaders resisted or promoted these qualities. In turn, these characteristics as well as school leaders' responses and attitudes towards them helps to explain why some schools fail to adapt to the particular needs of their schools.

#### **5.3.1 Fighting Complacency**

The research found evidence that with complacency, leaders are content with the status quo, resist change and pay insufficient attention to new opportunities and frightening new hazards. They continue with what has been the norm in the past, whether it damages diversity efforts or not. To understand these behaviours I will outline some of the reasons why school leaders often accepted complacency and resisted change.

People naturally hate to fail because it risks embarrassment, diminished stature, and a loss of respect. The fear of failure was particularly intense in the contexts being studied, considering the challenges that schools have to face, e.g. poverty, socio-economic status, student preparation and so on. Leaders therefore

continued to do what was expected of them – to be competent, make things happen, and get things done. Second, when it comes to explaining failure principals were more likely to attribute failure to actions of other people or external factors rather than associating failure with their own competencies. And finally, but most importantly, it has been overly stated that the bureaucratic and often technical issues that leaders face and with which they are trying to cope daily absorb useful resources and exhaust people. Thus, leaders resisted change, as few of those issues that they worked on were central to the organisation's success.

However, Athena and Ares have managed to make a clear commitment to dramatic changes from the status quo, and their leaders signalled the magnitude and urgency of that change. In contrast, previous research on leadership in challenging contexts has noted that school improvement requires a radical shift away from short-term approaches to change (Harris, 2009). My analysis showed that diverse schools actually require both quick and longer-term successes. When quick successes were unambiguous and visible, they demonstrated that a vision of the future has credibility. Quick success has also turned skeptics into supporters. Based on these findings it appears that when people see no wins within a sensible time frame, those who are making sacrifices can become discouraged.

However, quick fixes alone without long-term goals were likely to yield more complacency. I would suggest that after quick successes urgency towards change drops. Although quick fixes are necessary, especially early in the implementation process, long-term goals are necessary to keep urgency up. With a culture of urgency people deeply value the capacity to grab new opportunities and continually find ways to win. This supports previous research, which suggests that changes in diverse schools take time (Harris, 2009; Elmore, 2004). As was noted in an earlier chapter, changes do not occur in a straightforward, linear way. Just as with individual students, individual schools really do differ in the challenges they face and in their capacity to incorporate new practices.

Whereas successful schools constantly tried to create the thoughts, feelings and actions needed for long-term success, educators at Nestor seemed to underestimate the potential of complacency as well as its power and prevalence. People were content with the status quo, they paid insufficient attention to opportunities and continued with what has been the norm in the past. In contrast, at Ares Christopher scanned the environment for information relevant for success and survival in order to prevent likely problems. When he spotted problems, he created visions and strategies which he communicated throughout the school. More specifically, he preferred proactiveness to what he called as 'healing'. He believed that schools that are organised in such a way as to focus more on opportunities and hazards are most successful.

Behaving with great proactiveness and alertness every day does not mean creating too much stress for others and then becoming frustrated when no one else completes every goal tomorrow. People at Ares worked towards diversity goals every day without being pushed. Although Christopher had the ability to respond fast and make changes 'now', his patience was highly contagious. In fact, his attitudes, feelings and actions were all contagious. Because Christopher responded to problems quickly, teachers felt that they had to do the same, especially when he was demanding something for them. He was not punishing people if they did not get back to him quickly, but his praising and excitement about work had made people feel uncomfortable and urgent to respond back to him as soon as possible.

Similarly to Ares, the principal at Athena did not avoid troubling information. He noted that 'principals who shield teachers from disquieting news while trying to initiate change efforts, teachers do not help their efforts to make the equivalent changes to strengthen the school'. It must be noted, however, that Marcos's behaviour was not only visible, but it was determined and non-blaming. Such behaviour tended to be highly fulfilling and helped teachers fight complacency.



Complacency issues seemed to rest with schools such as Nestor that know that minority students are underperforming but they carry on as usual and in the end they survive. In contrast, to Ares, at Nestor leaders did not see opportunities or hazards and as a result their sense of alertness was extremely low. Even when the problem is right in their face they move into fixing it using old techniques or what has worked for them in the past. And when an important new issue arises, people cannot deal with it because they often feel anxious, angry and tired by other issues. Instead, schools that were found to be committed to leadership for equity and excellence have managed to convert these feelings into a commitment to move and do the right thing.

### **5.3.2 Leaders Thoughtfully Exceeding their Authority**

Teachers often noted that most of the work of leaders is disconnected from school realities and from what actually needs to be done. Principals, on the other hand, seemed to worry more about the technical part of their responsibilities and what those in formal authorities will see. But leaders committed to equity and excellence, as evidence suggests, often exceed their authorities if they want to successfully respond to complex challenges. A teacher gave a clear example of a leader exceeding his authority. This teacher noted the response of a nearby school principal when diverse students enrolled in his previously homogeneous school. The principal was pleased to be found working in this school as parents showed an increasing interest in their children's education; students came from high-economic status families. His only concern was minority students' limited Greek-language proficiency and the consequences that this had in mainstream classrooms. Since the principal resented bureaucratic procedures or as the teacher put it 'begging for more resources to tackle the problem', he placed school shop assistants<sup>2</sup> to teach the Greek-language to minority students. Although the teachers rightly described his act as illegal, they were nevertheless happy that their students were learning Greek and they could follow up in their classrooms. The principal carried on with this 'illegal action' to meet the needs of minority

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<sup>2</sup> People selling food during break time

students' learning. He risked losing credibility from his formal authorities and even losing his job. But he was eager to mobilise people towards equity and excellence and fulfil his social purpose.

From my findings, I would suggest that making progress requires going beyond any authoritative practice to mobilise discovery, shedding certain entrenched ways, tolerating losses, and generating the new capacity to thrive anew. In doing so they *thoughtfully* exceed their authority. As was seen, principals spent most of their time providing direction, protection and order. But in exceeding authority they raised the heat in their organisation by focusing people's attention on issues and responsibilities they found troubling and therefore avoided. They achieved this by raising difficult issues that nobody dared to discuss and pointed out the gaps between people's espoused values and actual behaviour. These leaders also called attention to challenging questions, disclosed external threats, exposed conflicts and challenged the norms. However, the actions of these leaders thoughtfully exceed authority only when they are considered legitimate and necessary to overcome diversity-related challenges. These findings also seemed to define the scope of leaders' authority in diverse contexts. This study then suggests that unless leaders exceed their scope of authority and dance on the edge of their scope of authority they may never move their organisation or community forward.

The findings of this research also emphasise that when leaders exceed authority, they do not have to become control-oriented principals to fight the inequitable status quo. These results are consistent with Blasé (1989) who found that more closed, control-oriented principals spawned an inauthentic, toxic culture in which teachers, students and parents felt a need to be deceptive and manipulative to get what they needed. Similarly, this research indicated that principals who created and fostered a culture of trust and diplomacy and could communicate, listen and inspire were the most effective. The results, however, also indicated that good relationships that are necessary for teaching and learning to take place, do not ensure high standards. Although they are necessary 'because equity issues are

messy, and such schools may prefer to maintain good relations' (Anderson, 2009, p. 39), good relations alone without being part of values and vision are not good enough. Analysis suggests that leaders who expend time and effort in building enduring organisations, infused with strong, authentic values and meaning beyond particular tasks and transactions, are most effective. For example, Elpida saw her work in the context of the larger system surrounding her schools. She considered teachers, students and parents and ensured that they all met high standards. The results show that these contexts require leaders who are willing to work through circles of influence rather than chains of command. Given the importance of followers in exercising leadership in these schools the next topic deals with followers.

### **5.3.3 Leadership and Followers**

When one looks at leaders such as those described above, strong and courageous in exceeding their formal authorities, he or she is more likely to make the leader attribution error in fixating on leaders to the exclusion of nearly everyone else. In Cyprus's diverse challenging school environments elements of admiration and envy in power relations were found to be extremely important. For them, a strong principal meant that they could turn to leaders in providing them with an easy explanation. This research indicates that people go along with their leaders because leaders provide them with a range of important benefits, at the level of the individual and at the level of the group. As Kellerman (2008) argues, there are three main reasons why individuals consciously or unconsciously determine it is in their interest to follow: (1) leaders provide individuals with safety, security and a sense of order; (2) leaders provide individuals with a group, a community, to which they can belong; and (3) leaders provide individuals with someone who does the collective work.

Although the study reaffirmed previous claims that the leaders' role is critical, findings also suggest that, like leaders, followers also exerted differing degrees of power and influence. Thus, findings indicate that diversity is changing one's

conception of who can and should lead. In the same way that leaders had something to offer to their followers, followers also had something to offer to their leaders. I would suggest that diverse contexts require not only strong, reliable and passionate leaders, but also capable followers who can influence their leader towards equity and excellence. Case studies showed followers providing answers to diversity issues before their leaders did. In diverse contexts, where issues of exclusion or marginalisation are salient, leaders and followers worked together to develop equity and excellence. Followers brought into the leadership system the same baggage that leaders brought with them – all of the personal characteristics derived from one's genetic make-up and life experiences. But they also brought with them power and influence. In other words, like leaders, followers were also expected to exert power and influence when the situation demanded.

Followers that used the power in the advantage of the school and influenced others to do the same were more likely to have a great impact in developing equity and excellence. These behaviours were highly desirable to school principals who often described their followers as withdrawn and caring little or even not at all about what happens at work. Such followers were found presenting problems even in cases that were less challenging, as their lack of trust, interest and involvement made them unsusceptible to influence. In contrast, good followers were more likely to be seen engaged with their leaders and other followers in solving diversity-related issues. Further evidence suggested that these followers were more likely to support good leaders rather than bad ones. This is because these followers drew on their values, convictions and passions to drive themselves forward against all odds. When their social purpose values meshed with those of leaders they became great followers. This is the main reason for followers feeling more inclined to follow leaders who work towards common good.

This research concurs with research by Sucher (2008) who wrote that for followers to follow they must first accept the legitimacy of the leader's actions.

Because leadership is based on a two-way relationship, leaders are judged in the moral domain about the decisions they make while building and exercising their authority. As evidence suggests, when leaders remain in the scope of authority described earlier, followers are more likely to follow. Leaders at this stage were found to maintain high levels of ethical performance standards reflecting idealised influence. By facing, discussing, analysing, and acting on a succession of moral challenges, individuals developed increasing moral awareness and judgements.

Thus, when leaders were ethical, effective followers tended to follow their leaders but when leaders were 'bad' some followed, others remained disengaged and others opposed. The meaning of 'oppose' in discussing followers is important. It is true that followers cannot oppose their leader's power or authority. What they can do, however, is to refuse to permit their lack of authority to preclude them from doing something they think should be done. Evidence suggests that followers can deviate from the norm as long as their opposing practice has a social purpose. Thus a good follower can oppose a leader who sits in the office relaxed or who concentrates more on technical challenges than diversity ones and engage in social purpose. This kind of follower is more important than someone who does not engage at all. However, silenced, disengaged, uninterested, withdrawn followers were also found even in the best organisations. In this case effective leaders stepped up and concerned themselves.

Another particularly interesting finding was followers' interaction between them. In coherent groups, followers didn't just follow their leaders but they followed each other as well. Members mirrored each other in their beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours. It also appeared that leaders who had the capacity to appreciate followers' core values were able to engage in actions that conveyed integrity, humility, sincerity and respect to followers. Through this behaviour, followers started to perceive the work towards equity and excellence as meaningful and valuable to society; they felt a commitment to their field and

dedication to their work, experiencing a profound motivation to serve the school and the community and to assist other individuals.

## **5.4 Intervene and Take Action**

So far the evidence suggested that leadership work is difficult to perform in isolation from followers. Evidence also suggests that leaders engage followers in defining strategies and executing goals. They find ways or interventions to help people throughout their organisation not only to feel intellectually engaged, but also to have a sense of personal contribution to the organisation's agenda. In practising leadership for equity and excellence, Cyprus's school leaders have made various interventions to help people in the organisations mobilise towards both equity and excellence. These involved making diversity a collective purpose, establishing communication throughout the system, changing school culture and acting politically. Thus, this section focuses on action – the practices and interventions of leadership on diversity issues. According to principals these interventions are more likely to point to a long-term solution to diversity issues rather than to quick fixes. They are also more likely to strengthen the school's capacity to deal with an ongoing stream of diversity challenges in the future.

### **5.4.1 Making Diversity a Collective Purpose**

Although principals had diversity goals as one of their priorities and purposes for their schools, their particular mix of purposes differed from those espoused by different members of the school. To manage this process, principals noted that sometimes they had to understand others' purposes and form collective purposes. Collective purpose worked effectively when the larger values of the organisation and those of individuals and groups meshed. The results therefore indicate that leaders' capacity to motivate followers depends on the leaders' ability to behave in a way that exemplifies the values and ideals that are shared by the groups they lead.

Cultivating teacher buy-in and collective purpose was a central concern in

promoting the deep cultural changes required for equity and excellence initiatives to be successful. At this juncture, concerns about building relational trust also came forcefully into play. Findings revealed that principals establish both respect and personal regard when they acknowledge the vulnerabilities of others, actively listen to their concerns and eschew arbitrary actions. Collective purpose also worked best when information and knowledge about effective practices were widely and openly shared and when monitoring mechanisms were in place to detect and address ineffective actions while also identifying and consolidating effective practices. Principals preferred not to advocate their priorities and values because not everyone shared them or wanted to even listen to them.

#### **5.4.2 Communication Throughout the System**

Principals committed to equity and excellence spent most of their time not necessarily processing information but actually collecting and disseminating information for its own sake. In Marcos's words:

the principal is the spokesperson for the school, he represents the school and its expertise to the outside world and he or she keeps outside stakeholders informed on its progress. He also speaks to teachers about broad issues...

The communicating role existed as a kind of membrane all around the leader, through which all leadership work passed. Marcos spent considerable amounts of time informing and advising, communicating, and getting information.

The schools differed in the extent to which principals and teachers communicated with one another. However, communication between teachers and principals tended to be infrequent as compared with teacher-to-teacher communication. Moreover, teachers of the Greek language were less likely to be found reporting to the principal. Scholars suggest that communication between teachers within the operating core of the school is more meaningful to teachers than communication with individuals in the middle line of the school (Forsyth

and Hoy, 1978). This research extends these findings and suggests that the leader is not a specialist, as he is not charged with that particular aspect of the school's work; he is, however, a relative generalist who usually knows more than any of them about the whole set of specialties together.

Based on this research's findings, leaders also deal with others as individuals and considering their needs, abilities, and aspirations as they work together to further their development. They are empathetic towards their followers, understand what they are about, and make them feel valued because their leaders are paying special attention to them. In addition, the findings suggest that principals who are serious about changing diversity practices connect with school members through honest, open, and two-way dialogues. Communication reminds school members constantly of the organisation's goals and strategies.

### **5.4.3 Establishing and Strengthening Culture**

The study suggests that school leaders play a key role in establishing and strengthening the school culture. Successful schools were those that forged a school culture that enabled all stakeholders to think of themselves as learners. These schools also established a safe and orderly environment, shaped the character of the school, built strategy into the school's structure, and infused the system with values.

Findings also revealed that the history and culture of a school constrained the changes the principals wished to make. For example, as was seen at Athena and Leander, the principals' predecessor had performed poorly and as a result teachers expected a strong mandate for change. These findings suggest that principals inherit people, resources, capabilities, strategies, and cultures – all of which may limit their ability to act as if they had a blank sheet of paper. This work could also suggest that in the case where a school has performed well, the principal would be expected to make his or her own mark. After all leadership is the creation of positive change over time.



#### **5.4.4 Acting Politically**

Leaders used various interventions to back up efforts that engage individuals and groups in different ways and at different points in time. Leaders and teachers pointed out the need to think politically to manage conflict, persuade, and collaborate with different groups of people. Thus thinking politically describes the leadership task of understanding the relationships and concerns among people in an organisation. Politics, however, can take a variety of forms. The principal at Ares offered furious parents a place to sit, coffee, and plenty of time to listen. This was one way through which Christopher managed to develop networks of trust with school parents. He knew that too much power can interfere with school effectiveness and progress at all levels. These findings agree with Nye's (2010) calls for more 'soft power politics of attraction' (p. 326), as a way of bringing rivals closer, in order to coax significant contributions from them. He defines soft power as 'getting the outcomes one wants by attracting others rather than manipulating their material incentives' (p. 307). Similarly, leaders in the schools being studied thought politically while discerning the formal and informal exercise of power and took time to understand the differences, interests, and fears of everyone who had a problem or who disagreed with an initiative or change.

Eventually, Christopher became a master in dealing with conflicts. He helped himself and the school by connecting with people and building up relationship capital when things were getting tough. Listening to them to comprehend their interests and values was very important to the school's progress. Every school celebration, he would ask parents whether they wanted their children to participate in the particular way the school was proposing. The principal slowly was starting to earn credibility through some early wins. Moreover, by placing some discipline targets throughout the school as a starting point he restored Greek-Cypriots confidence, those he needed to have on his side if he wanted peace in the school.

Greek-Cypriots felt that the presence of Turkish-Cypriot students in the schools had a negative impact on their children's learning. Connecting with the opposition was not an easy task. Their differing perspectives were strong but the school had to carry its initiative forward. The principal tried to stay close to both oppositions. He spent time with them, asked for their input in every school's initiative, listened closely to their reality, and took their temperature to assess how much heat the school was putting on them and how desperate they were becoming. The school started placing parents from all cultural backgrounds in the parent school board, included them in meetings, and allowed them to feel that their perspectives and insights on the interventions were respected.

Evidence indicates that principals have good reasons to spend time with diverse groups. Spending time with them can help take the edge off their hostility and thus soften their determination to block the efforts of the school. By meeting with them principals can acknowledge the sacrifices they are asking them to make and how difficult and painful those sacrifices may be. When people feel that someone understands them they start being less hostile towards another and his or her idea. In addition spending time with diverse groups enables principals to assess how much pressure they feel from their initiative and calibrate their tactics accordingly.

### **5.5 Involve Social Identity Issues**

Leaders used a great deal of identity salience in their efforts to bring different groups to work cooperatively rather than competitively. This study supports the claims that social identity becomes particularly salient when it is associated with minority students, when social groups have meaning within a particular context or organisation, or when identity is threatened as a result of negative stereotypes or treatment directed toward one's group (Steele, 2004). In their efforts to develop equity and excellence, leaders tried to emphasise different characteristics in different settings to appeal to different groups. More often their opinions seemed to mirror the popular opinion of the moment. For instance, Marcos's

effectiveness was due in part to his responsiveness and ability to change according to the situation. These issues become significant when considering shared identity, dual identity, and conflict between different groups. In this section I will describe how leadership fostered common categories or shared identities and motivated cooperation without infringing important subgroup ties. I begin by a discussion of the importance of a shared identity in diverse contexts, and then its role in reducing conflict and promoting cooperation between different groups.

### **5.5.1 Tactics that Bridge Social Identity Groups**

Below I describe the four tactics that leaders used in bridging social identity groups together.

#### **5.5.1.1 Building Identification**

A common process that principals used in bringing different groups together involved the creation of a single group identity that was inclusive across social groups. The increasing flow of immigrants in Cyprus has frightened the majority group. For example, several leaders emphasised the deleterious effects of low-income, racially segregated neighbourhoods on the social disorganisation of community life, including the social instability that leads to high crime rates. They also raised concern about their permanent establishment and the effect that this may have on their cultural values for the majority group. I would suggest that when group identities and their associated cultural values are vital to one's functioning, then demands to abandon these group identities are likely to arouse tension and conflict. The more minority groups establish themselves as a permanent part of the national scene, the more they frighten Greek-Cypriots who believe that their national identity could be altered forever. Findings also revealed that visible signs or symbols of non-integration (such as the veil) set off xenophobic anxiety and threaten the integrity of the group. At Nestor, for example, the principal asked a teacher to remove a photo from the school's future manual because in the photo there was a girl wearing the veil. These findings suggest that people then become more motivated to reaffirm their distinctive

group identity. Schein (2006), who added a cultural perspective to this insight, explains that 'one source of strength for cultural assumptions is that they are shared and that they need to remain in the groups that keeps them' (p. 618). What follows is that changing culture is in effect asking groups and communities to alter one of their shared characteristics.

#### **5.5.1.2 Creating a Safe Space**

In their efforts to build equity and excellence, leaders sought to create a safe third space where social interactions were person-based rather than based on identity. Leaders who created such spaces first realised the impact that identity has on students' learning and their sense of belonging at school. The creation of neutral zones encouraged the development of relationships between different members of the schools and brought issues of race and diversity to the surface. In so doing, people felt safe to explore their values and develop new language. In creating third spaces principals organised after-school activities such as bringing parents to learn the Greek language, food festivals, gardening sessions, and so on. Although these events met with resistance at first, as groups were not always able to get along and leaders often found themselves caught in the middle, these events created a more positive and collaborative work environment. While formally separate, they came together in joint task forces to share best practices and learn from one another. The study demonstrated that bridging social identities using this tactic allows leaders to create a third space where people can interact not as members of distinct groups but rather as unique individuals.

School leaders also organised events that were both informative and fun. The purpose of these events was to bring individuals to know one another outside the context of task-activity. During these sessions individuals were encouraged to share personal life events and lessons and hold dialogues. The emphasis was tilted on both togetherness and towards the emotional side rather than on the task-related work. Rather than having their identities acknowledged and values through task-activity, individuals' participation in these events forged relationships and made individuals feel emotionally connected to one another and

to the school. In this way people reacted as unique individuals rather than as members of distinct groups.

#### **5.5.1.3 Building Shared Identity**

In building shared identity, principals not only tried to incorporate fair procedures into their dealing with different group members, but they also tried to build a sense of 'we'. Thus, to promote a shared identity and bridge deep identity divisions or cultural divides, the principals tried to transcend differences and build a shared sense of 'we'. With humans sharing strong needs for both distinctiveness and belonging, it was found that principals who increased the salience, relevance, and importance of belonging to the school were most successful. Evidence also suggests that school transformation requires that social groups reframe their differences and identify with the school's broader mission. More specifically it was found that schools that highlighted issues such as caring for those in need, climate change, race, and so on, encouraged people to come to terms with intractable social identity issues that play out in the broader society. For instance, when Nestor asked students to plant trees as a way to protect the environment, the interactions that flourished during these activities made members of different groups able to identify with one another as stewards of climate change. Because these practices appeal to a larger societal value that improves the world condition, the outline for a new, inclusive identity was found to bring students together. I would suggest that compelling missions or visions can create an inclusive, shared identity that bridges disparate social groups.

#### **5.5.1.4 Embedding Groups within the Larger Whole**

Leaders' promotion of shared group identities was found to have negative consequences when there were important dimensions of diversity within the group. I would suggest that the creation of a shared identity without explicitly recognising the value of other identities can adversely affect within-group dynamics. To overcome these issues the principal at Leander used a different technique from those described above. The principal believed that when children use their distinct talents and roles and embed them in the larger mission, goal, or

objective, students feel that their identities are valued. She wanted students to be part of their school identity but also of their racial or ethnic group. She thus decided to give students different duties, structured in such a way that success required the joint and distinctive resources of both subgroups. As some groups liked painting – she gave them paintings; other groups liked music – she gave them music; and other students liked theatre – she gave them theatre. In this way all group identities were emphasised, giving each other cooperative interdependence. Elpida noted that after the work had ended, relationships between students lasted. The school then achieved its own dual identity by bringing different groups together working on the same task. In this way the school promoted a shared identity but kept each group identities salient.

Evidence also suggests that when group identities are made salient and subgroup identities are part of a larger shared identity, bias and conflict are reduced. These findings are consistent with Dovidio, Gaertner and Lamoreaux's (2009) proposition that 'cultural heritage and mainstream identities are relatively independent' (p. 9). This research reaffirms these assertions and suggests that since individuals frequently belong to several groups simultaneously and possess multiple potential identities, it is possible to activate or introduce a shared identity even while separate group identities are salient. I would suggest that maintaining dual identities may reduce tensions and bias between different groups.

This study's findings illustrate the significance of realising that members of different groups have distinct but complementary roles to contribute in developing the vision or goal of the school. Leaders who organised tasks or events so that different groups of students could come together to work towards the common good for the school were most effective. Their actions affirmed groups' connection to the school or community of which they are part. I would suggest that leaders who successfully create a world in which people want to belong focus on shaping experience.

### **5.5.2 The Challenge of a Dual Identity**

My analysis showed that majority and minority groups have differences in their identity preferences. Whereas majority group members favoured the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant culture, minority group members desired to retain their cultural identity but typically in connection with other groups in the larger culture. This was the case in almost all schools. No matter how hard teachers wanted to integrate cultural identities into the school culture, the dominant culture always prevailed. Assimilation was more often the case than multicultural integration. However, as was indicated, different groups reacted differently to assimilation and multicultural integration. At Leander, the school principal noted that Arab mothers not only liked talking about their differences, but they wanted their differences to be heard by the principal. Therefore, while the majority group members preferred discourse that focuses virtually on commonality, minority group members were more balanced in their preference to discuss group differences and commonalities.

The principals also tried to bring groups together by treating people with respect. They signalled respect in how they treated people and how they expected them to treat others. The development of a culture of respect was found to be crucial for several reasons. First, receiving respect seemed to affirm an individual's worth. In the case of Ares, the principal conveyed respect and affection in his efforts to promote positive attitudes towards different groups. Second, status distinctions seemed to become less important when individuals knew that they were valued and respected in the workplace regardless of status differences. Again at Ares, the Turkish religious guide was respected regardless of his status differences and the conflict that might have aroused when he was present at the school.

### **5.5.3 Conflict: Its Roots and Benefits**

Leaders often failed to act in situations where social identity-based conflict occurred. Conflict seemed to arise from people's desire to remain both distinctive and superior to others. One particularly interesting finding was that while some

schools experienced everyday conflict between different minority groups, in other schools conflict roots went deeper and related to the past. I would suggest that conflict or tension between identity groups in organisations and the society as a whole is not simply a result of present day conflict. As was demonstrated, both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots' extensive history of conflict had a powerful influence on the way interactions between groups are perceived today. At Ares, for example, conflict was more salient compared with the other schools because of the presence of Turkish-Cypriots.

Schools were also found to vary in their ability or willingness to talk about the dynamic of social identity-based conflict. Predominantly minority schools were able to recognise and discuss the phenomenon more easily than less diverse schools. But the organisational context also played a proximal role similar to school heterogeneity. For example, schools that had strong equity-oriented values often discussed the issue of conflict with greater ease than other schools, due in part to the fact that the work of such schools often related to issues of equity and social justice. Rather than viewing cooperation and conflict as outcomes these schools viewed conflict as a 'process'. The findings suggest that when conflict is viewed in this way it can make complementary contributions to individual and organisational development. More successful schools viewed the potentially 'negative consequences' of diversity (e.g. on a group's morale because of conflict) as a process potentially leading to the development of a better society or organisation. These findings demonstrate that conflict may represent a healthy developmental stage through which principals need to go because the process of conflict and subsequent reconciliation can ultimately enhance feelings of shared fate and solidify common group identity.

The findings of this research also underline the important role of 'cooperation' in 'conflict' processes. In conflict situations, cooperation was achieved at the expense of silencing disadvantaged groups. However, the data also provide strong support that conflict can be a process that recognises dissent, allows the expression of minority views and increases the diversity of ideas and



perspectives available within the group. At Ares, the principal's actions in allowing the minority's voice to be heard contributed to the school as a whole. These findings suggest that under certain conditions dissent expressed by the minority voice can lead to more creative solutions to problems. When individuals were exposed to dissenting opinions, they were more likely to generate novel solutions to problems, compared with others whose members were not exposed to dissent. These results show that the effects of diversity may be shaped by the longevity of group relationships.

## **5.6 Pursue Excellence**

Beyond managing the various identity tensions and transmitting society's culture and values to its young, school leaders in diverse schools, findings suggest, play an important role in leading high-quality teaching and learning as a means of improving students' academic performances and bridging their need and desire to retain their native cultures. This section describes the main insights of value to school leaders interested in developing quality teaching and learning. It identifies practices necessary not simply to advance intergroup harmony and reduce conflict among ethnic groups, but also as a means of actually improving students' academic performances and bridging their need and desire to retain their native cultures while at the same time acquiring the skills necessary to survive in the modern economy. The main elements that were of particular value to school leaders included high-quality teaching, absence of discrimination and racism, high expectations, and emotions reinforcement.

### **5.6.1 The Language 'Deficit'**

According to the present findings, the main focus of multicultural education in Cyprus today is language. It has been recognised in Chapter 2 that educational reforms that respond to the language needs of newcomer students make only limited progress. This is because language paradigms promote strong assimilationist ideologies and propel the mainstream country to view itself as a monocultural and monolingual nation. Similarly, the language paradigm was

reflected in responses of leaders who were keenly aware of the language and cultural problems which newcomer immigrants are dealing with. Although the cultures and languages of minority students were considered as a matter for discussion, they were often used as barriers in their teaching and deficits. These explanations seemed to blame students' language or dialect differences for any problems they face. The literature has criticised such accounts and noted that they often centre on the individualistic and deficit-oriented nature of accounts wherein minority students are defined solely in terms of, and are blamed for, aberrant behaviours, whereas context-sensitive explanations are given short shrift (Deschenes, Cuban and Tyack, 2001). Similarly, in Japan, where the main focus of multicultural education is language and its implementation as a special measure to teach Japanese as a second language, the culture and language of immigrant students is put second. Minority students have only made limited progress because of the propensity of the Japanese education system to 'nurture Japanese nationals' (Hirasawa, 2009). This study demonstrates that the language programme experiences revealed that an exclusive focus on teaching the mainstream language will not resolve the complex problems that many minority groups face and therefore such approaches are simply insufficient.

Leaders also showed concern about the quality of teachers taking classes in Greek as a second language. Teachers taking these classes were more likely to be inexperienced and in some cases they happened to be in their first year of teaching career. Teaching minority students classes was often considered undesirable by most teachers both because of the presence of minority students and the lack of materials for teaching Greek as a second language. Apart from linguistically appropriate materials, teachers and principals believed that schools need an intensive welcome class for these students. Students' Greek proficiency was made problematic and children entered schools with fewer requisite skills than their native peers.

Leaders have also pointed out the role of linguistic diversity in multicultural education. At present, multicultural education in Cyprus has not taken into

account the significance of language differences. But the education of language minority students is part and parcel of multicultural education. Apart from multicultural education, fostering bilingual education was also reported as a way of respecting minority students' identities and their educational needs. These results are consistent with Nieto (2009) who points out the close connection of bilingual and multicultural education, suggesting:

The fields of bilingual and multicultural education are inextricably connected, both historically and functionally. If the languages students speak, with all their attendant social meanings and affirmations, are either negated or relegated to a secondary position in their schooling, the possibility of school failure is increased. (p. 116)

Although bilingual education could be an effective means of teaching students, pedagogical approaches alone do not obviate the problems that minority students face. Instead, evidence suggests that if pedagogical approaches need to exclude their compensatory nature; the assumption is that language diversity is an illness that needs to be cured. As it was seen, some teachers forbid students talking in their native languages. It is therefore not surprising that the major problem facing minority children has often been articulated as one of not knowing Greek. But more culturally responsive school leaders have recognised that the language dominance of students is not the real issue; rather, the way in which teachers and schools view students' language may have an even greater influence on their achievement. This evidence suggests that even if teachers receive the best training in language acquisition – as many school leaders have highlighted – it does not guarantee that teachers will be successful with the growing number of minority students in their schools. What these schools need are teachers who change their attitudes towards the students, their languages, and cultures, and their communities. The next issue takes these views further suggesting that high-quality teaching is necessary throughout the school and not just in the implementation of effective programmes.

### **5.6.2 Quality of Teaching**

The findings of this study highlight the significance of high quality teaching that engages and challenges students and functions effectively to help students experience the joys and rewards of reaching for excellence. Data demonstrated that teaching which is responsive to the needs of individual children and is flexible enough not to place ceilings on their progress is likely to benefit all children and enhance the opportunities for those who start behind to catch up. The integration and successful instruction of education for students with ethnic minority backgrounds was also a major preoccupation for school leaders. Principals complained about teachers' lack of training and ability to teach in diverse classrooms. Teachers attended minority schools believing that they would teach as they had always done. When teaching methods and strategies that were evaluated as successful in the past did not work in the new environment the school population was blamed. Teachers believed that changing their teaching strategies or raising their expectation would make no difference to students' learning.

Teachers in the current study also revealed that they prefer to teach in less heterogeneous schools and perhaps give Greek-Cypriot students more plentiful and unambiguous support. Teachers noted that they enjoy teaching students who are not difficult, conform to the teachers' rules and have interested or cooperative parents. It seems that there is a reciprocal effect between student behaviour and teacher performance. Children's behaviour and even their parents' behaviours affected teachers' preferences. Observations showed that teachers in heterogeneous schools can 'be biased' in ways as simple as reinforcing a propensity of white children to speak more often in class. However, as the principal at Athena stressed, minority students are those who need to be given priority in expressing themselves more. In particular, he noted: 'When teachers want children to read a particular book but they know they won't understand the book's references to airplanes, they have students visit an airport'. The principal used field trips in a deliberate and thoughtful way. He believed that minority

students ought to be given aids to express themselves. Classes took field trips about once a month, and teachers thought deeply about the kind of knowledge students need to understand to get the most out of the trip to the local zoo, the museum, the theatre, or wherever they are going. He also knew that many of their students have rarely left their neighbourhoods, and in order to be educated need exposure to the wider world. These findings suggest that when students are given opportunities to bring out their experiences, the rich interplay of ideas and cultures brought to the surface can stimulate excitement and energy amongst students.

The current system, however, does not help teachers understand the importance of cultural awareness and its relation to teaching and learning. This is due in part to the fact that the current school system rarely provides sufficient support for ongoing teacher development, and the support that the MOEC offers tends to come in the form of one-time professional development sessions that usually do not take into account specific contexts or teachers' needs. It was therefore, not surprising to find teachers who get transferred in diverse schools struggling. The issues seemed to be even more complicated with teachers working in homogeneous schools for long periods before being recruited in a diverse school, and then realising that what has worked in the past is no longer relevant and that they need to grow professionally to be able to cope.

School leaders emphasised to teachers the need to build close social relationships with minority students as an essential part of high-quality teaching. They believed that when teachers built relationships with students as a way of reaching excellence, students' achievement increases. This is consistent with literature which suggests that relationships in school play a particularly crucial role in promoting socially competent behaviour in the classroom and in fostering academic engagement and achievement (Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004; Suarez-Orozco and Sattin, 2007). The present study extends these findings and suggests that social relationships supported not only academic outcomes, but they also provided a variety of protective functions – a sense of belonging,

emotional support, tangible assistance and information, cognitive guidance, and positive feedback. Successful adaptations among minority students appeared to be linked to the quality of relationships they forged in their school.

School leaders also mentioned affective outcomes of education at some point in their interviews. Affective objectives describe students' attitudes, interests, and values. Most of today's curricular aims are cognitive (intellectual) and only a small number of them deal with affective outcomes (such as acquiring positive attitudes towards learning). Teachers noted the following affective attitudes or outcomes that they would like their students to attain: (1) positive attitude towards learning, (2) more positive attitudes towards themselves, and (3) more appropriate attitudes towards others whose backgrounds are different from their own.

In contrast to previous studies, which showed that minority students in Cyprus need strong psychological support from educational psychologists (Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh, 2004), the study found that what students really need is 'emotional intelligence' that creates a safe environment where teaching and learning can take place. Teachers pointed out that social emotional learning can help students acquire a set of social and emotional skills, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making within the context of a safe, supportive environment. According to school leaders, because affective outcomes and social emotional learning are not measured, a wrong message is sent to teachers, that the affective consequences of schooling are not important. As one principal pointed out: 'we are not teaching students to love learning. I doubt the way we are teaching students it's going to help them to go and listen to a lecture when they grow up'. For this principal, love for learning is an affective consequence of schooling that must be zealously sought. The cognitive skills and knowledge that students will need during the long-term future are important, but teachers also want them to leave school with affective dispositions that will incline them to use their acquired cognitive skills and knowledge for the rest of their lives.

The major argument was that having emotional skills could lead to greater social, academic, and life success. Denham and Weissberg (2004) caution that social emotional learning programming must be 'culturally relevant, empowering children within their unique cultural environments', also noting the possibility that 'certain second English language definitions may be unique to the child's home culture' (p. 41).

### **5.6.3 Consciously Anti-Racist Leadership Practices**

Despite the big disparities in teaching Greek as a second language, it was evident that a number of minority students were experiencing racism and discrimination. Educators seemed to endorse the traditional values and norms of their own cultures. Findings indicated that opportunities for minority students were fundamentally different from those of white peers as is the daily experience of inequality. Educators were in fact continuously targeting these children, and as a result students appeared to be experiencing lack of satisfaction in their schools, one with which white students did not have to cope. Often, high-qualified and talented teachers used different interventions every day and when they didn't work they blamed minority students. It is time, therefore, to accept that educators' white, middle-class perspectives will not always work for these children. This is a difficult task because teachers tend to deny, defend, or shut down when issues of race are brought up.

Although the issue of race was not easily brought in the interviews, principals did mention it near the end of each interview. It seems that although race was a central issue, educators often preferred not to talk about it. Some principals expressed concerns that using the word 'racism' could potentially spark fear in some teachers who would misinterpret it to mean that they are racist. The study suggests that it is crucial that schools discuss unambiguously and openly what is their stance on racism. Having authentic conversations about racism enables educators to work together to destroy institutional barriers that have sorted

students for a long time. Successful principals reported an increase in their understanding of others' attitudes and beliefs. They also had a deeper understanding about racial differences and served as catalysis for problem solving in each school. In other words, their experiences in these schools have made them stronger to talk about and deal with race-related issues.

#### **5.6.4 Transformation of Leaders' Expectations About Students' Potential**

No matter what strategies principals and teachers used to improve their schools, their expectations and perceptions seemed to weigh heavily in students' motivation to perform well in school. The findings of the present study suggest that leadership for equity entails taking care of students' concerns about teachers' perceptions. The research found that teachers underestimated the latent potential of minority students more than that of Greek-Cypriots. They often assumed that children from particular minority groups, especially from the Middle East, are not 'academically oriented'. Some teachers even equated accents with low cognitive abilities. These findings resemble observations from earlier studies, which also give reasons for what might explain differences in the consequences of teachers' perceptions. Weinstein (1985) speculates, 'minority status may play a role in the vulnerability with which students respond to teacher expectations. Differences in cultural values (family compared to school) may serve to immunize some children from the impact of teacher views of their performance or alternatively to heighten their susceptibility to the dominant viewpoint' (p. 344). Ferguson (2009) states that 'perhaps more for black children than for white, teachers play a central role in determining how students feel about their positions in the achievement hierarchy' (p. 95).

This study shows that teachers' stereotypical practices not only impact students' achievement but they do not allow organisations to change and develop. Evidence suggests that organisational spaces remain static with social interaction being identity-group based rather than person-based. The curriculum that



pervaded all schools also reinforced these stereotypes even more through its silence around minorities' histories. When the history or the literature of minorities was presented alongside the national school celebrations or taught in the classroom, it was usually relegated to the periphery of the curriculum, thereby marking minority issues as being somehow distinct from 'mainstream Cypriot' concerns. In addition, superficial approaches to multicultural education, such as programmes that focus on minority holidays and foods, represented another attempt to include minority issues in school curriculum, but the token approach with which many were implemented often served merely to perpetuate stereotypes.

### **5.7 Contrasting Case Studies: Numbers Matter**

The two predominantly minority and two diverse schools differed in certain respects including enactment of new values. In both predominantly minority schools principals had the ambition to change their schools. Although both schools were among the oldest in Cyprus, principals wanted to re-grow the schools and this required substantial creativity to move the school forward and establish viability. In contrast, in the two diverse schools leaders spoke less about the need for new values enactment or articulation of existing ones. Perhaps new values may have less favourable effects in diverse schools. One reason that may explain this phenomenon is that the imposition of new opportunities may dilute its attention on the refining of the existing directions and strategies. In such contexts, the frequent strategic redirection initiated by leaders with strong personal values could interfere with such routines to the point that management costs become substantially increased; this in turn can significantly interfere with school's performance. Ling, Zhao and Baron (2007) suggest that researchers cannot always expect to find the same effects for all organisation leader values at all times; although some values may matter more when an organisation is small and others may have greater impact when an organisation is larger and more mature.

The impact of schooling on academic achievement, attitudes, and aspirations also varied between the two groups of schools. The study showed that students in diverse schools are exposed to a more rigorous curriculum. Predominantly Greek-Cypriot classrooms gave minority students equitable access to the advanced subject matter they needed to enrol in universities. In contrast, in schools where students were predominantly minority there was a differential access to equitable learning opportunities. For example, teaching was not rigorous, basic-curriculum education was promoted, and generally standards were lower. The principals believed that both minority and majority groups of students scored lower in schools with high concentrations of minority students, and that minority students' achievement is possibly positively associated with the proportion of their schoolmates who were Cypriot. Thus, research shows that minority students learn somewhat more in schools where the majority are Greek-Cypriots than where they are the minority. Although principals based these results on cultural deficit theories, which assume that mere exposure to Greek-Cypriot classmates would create the possibility for lateral transmission of values that might raise minority achievement, more research is needed in examining access to learning opportunities or other mediating mechanisms (high teacher expectations, positive school climate, etc.) that are related to academic success.

In contrast to academic achievement benefits, in predominantly minority schools there was a major social benefit for minority children. Principals and teachers in these schools were more willing to engage in interactions with children of different race and talk about problems that these students might be facing. In contrast, in the two diverse schools, conversations concerning diversity issues as well as interactions between teachers and students tended to be lower. It would be interesting to investigate what actually happens in schools where minority students are only a small proportion of the school population. It is possible that students will be more likely to want to hide their differences and try to look like the others – homogeneous group students – than to show up their identity. On the other hand, when there are a few other students they find one another and form

groups. The principal at Ares did not want children either to change and lose their identities nor to be preoccupied with which interest group to join. He was concerned that children will rush to join a group instead of letting students choose what they want to emphasise about themselves.

Heightened teacher expectations and reduced prejudice also tended to be higher in predominantly minority schools. In these schools teachers promoted a range of positive cross-race attitudes and interactions, including tolerance, understanding, and positive racial attitudes. Evidence suggests that teachers who teach in diverse classroom environments can positively impact their interracial friendliness. Moreover, social benefits were also noted in the interaction of children from diverse populations in the predominantly majority schools. It seems that children benefit most from reduced prejudice when students are placed in racially integrated schools and not overwhelmingly white.

Predominantly minority schools had the autonomy to engage in systematic change, which helped them achieve gains in student performance. These two schools also differed in their willingness to take on the concerns and challenges facing highly challenged, high poverty students. Thus, what was different in these schools was their overriding mission to serve students and make decisions in their best interest, as opposed to structures, contracts, and schedules that pose barriers to responding to the needs of individual learners. In contrast, principals in predominantly white schools were less proactive about mitigating racial exclusion in social networks, curriculum, pedagogy, and extracurricular activities. Educators lacked the awareness and were ill equipped to deal with the social and cultural challenges that were aroused within their walls. It is important to note, however, that the trust the MOEC placed on principals in Athena and Ares along with the availability of abundant resources enabled them to break hierarchical processes and become more proactive. These findings suggest that when individuals and groups have more ways of connecting to adjacent layers within the system they are more likely to exercise proactive leadership.

Because the number of minority students in each school differed, responsibility and role attention towards equity and excellence varied. In predominantly white schools, the problems were many and therefore they required leadership from every part of the school. In less diverse schools there was a limited consensus among school leaders as to who should be responsible for equity and excellence issues. In addition, collaboration approaches to promoting school-wide equitable teaching and learning were more obvious in the two predominantly minority schools. In contrast, in less diverse schools equity depended on individual effort, with little conscious initiation on the part of school stakeholders. School stakeholders were unclear about who should be involved and responsible for promoting equity. Some associated responsibility with the MOEC, others with teachers and principals and even parents.

It was clear that in predominantly minority schools leadership mattered. The number of minority students placed the schools in difficult situations. However, the study does not suggest that leadership matters less in predominantly majority schools. As it has been suggested, in the latter schools a more close attention is needed to the education of these children as they are more likely to feel more isolated and abandoned. Rather, the study takes the position that focusing on the contexts where leadership matters appears to be perhaps a more productive line of inquiry than simply asking whether leadership matters.

## **5.8 Summary**

This chapter has presented the six leadership practices identified from cross-case analysis. First, leaders go through various transformations to close the gap between their own mental complexity and the complexity of diversity demands. Second, it was found that diversity challenges can be addressed when principals prioritise their values. Third, schools committed to equity and excellence share certain qualities that make them distinguishable, adaptive and responsive to diversity challenges; they are not complacent; exceed authorisers' expectations, and have good followers. Fourth, school leaders play a key role in developing

## Chapter Five: Six Leadership Practices for Pursuing Equity and Excellence

interventions that aim to mobilise people to act and address diversity challenges. Interventions such as having a collective purpose, communicating all around, changing the school culture, and acting politically were identified. Fifth, school leaders in diverse schools play an important role in leading high-quality teaching and learning as a means of improving students' academic performances and bridging their need and desire to retain their native cultures. Sixth, the way leaders direct and manage the forces of social identity in promoting positive relations was described. In bridging differences, leaders create third spaces, build a shared identity, and they embed groups within the larger whole. The next chapter presents findings on the education of school leaders in the schools of Cyprus.

## CHAPTER

## 6

# Leadership Development and Policy Issues

As the conception of the principal's role has shifted from building manager to leading for equity and excellence, the types of individuals being selected into administrative preparation programmes and the quality of those programmes have not kept with the change. Thus, to ensure equity and excellence in today's context means enhancing, not limiting, the professional nature of leadership. Because the landscape of supports for quality leadership in Cyprus is inadequate, creating an infrastructure that can routinely recruit and prepare leaders effectively and can support successful teaching at scale is the arena in which Cyprus lags the most. This chapter relates to research question two and how to best prepare leaders to lead in diverse contexts.

The findings show that Cyprus's public education fails to attract, prepare, and support the next generation of outstanding school leaders. Leaders suggest new standards for selecting principals, creating breakthrough training programmes for principals, and placing principals in schools with the decision-making authority that makes it possible for leadership to have an impact. Leadership impact and, more specifically, the relationship between school leadership and equity and excellence were evident in the previous chapter. It was demonstrated that school leadership practices significantly determined the academic prospects of all students. In fact, the schools that absorbed change more easily were those with strong leadership. The difference was on the quality of leadership practices described above.

The inadequacy of existing principal training programmes in Cyprus is a reality. It was confirmed that principals' preparation is outdated. This is because the programme is not focused on training leaders to work in diverse contexts. Unfortunately, a clear conception of the aims of leadership processes at schools is missing from the current leadership programme. The programme for preparing educators continues to be driven by what providers want to offer – not by what schools or staff need. The programme offered by the Pedagogical Institute focuses incorrectly on classroom-based educational theory rather than practical skill development that working principals need. Leaders suggested that an integrated approach to considering theories in the light of theory and practice would have enabled them to become responsible for their own professional learning after leaving the programme.

My analysis suggests that success depends not only on well-prepared teachers and leaders who provide excellent instruction, but it also depends on institutionalising learning and a supportive policy system. While formal training programmes represented an important component of leadership development, this programme, however, was found to suffer from relatively poor transfer. School demographics, as was seen in previous chapters, have resulted in a rapid shifting of leadership performance requirements. This in turn required flexible development strategies that permitted more immediate expansion of human capital. Accordingly, schools in Cyprus and their leaders have sought alternative means of developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed in a dynamic environment. This dynamic has prompted the diverse schools of Cyprus to place greater responsibility on organisational learning processes. When leaders were engaged in these processes, they worked systematically together in a collegial fashion to build the knowledge and skills necessary to develop equity and excellence. As such, this notion of leadership elevates the importance of building leaders. The study recognises learning as a generative process that enhances the capacity of organisational participants to develop equity and

excellence. I would suggest that schools that learn and continuously improve their processes in ways that reflect changes in the external context are likely to survive and thrive in ever changing school demographics.

Darling-Hammond (2010) notes that 'to take the education of poor children as seriously...we need to create systems that guarantee all of the elements of educational investment routinely to all children' (p. 279). When structural conditions enable teachers to connect to those resources, teachers are better able to address local problems of practice (Bidwell and Yasumoto, 1997), take risks intended to improve practice (Bryk and Schneider, 2002), and develop a shared commitment to organisational goals (Kruse, 2001). My data analysis showed that MOEC has failed to offer a supportive policy system pointed to the goals that matter most to school. I will therefore discuss the necessary policy-related issues required if school leaders are to work more effectively and institutionalise learning at all levels of the system.

The first section of this chapter examines how to best prepare leaders for diverse schools. The main programme components, namely selection process, curriculum content and field-based experiences, will be discussed. The second section describes how leaders institutionalised learning. The final section outlines the key policy-related issues that the system requires, as suggested by principals, to assist leadership work.

### **6.1 Developing the Next Generation of Principals**

The current education system in Cyprus requires a new programme of leadership development that aims to develop principals' unique leadership style and to cultivate the necessary skills needed to develop equity and excellence in schools. Findings suggest that policy makers have failed to adapt rigorous selection process, curriculum content, and field-based experiences for candidates to prepare them to lead in such schools.



### **6.1.1 Selection Process**

Literature suggests that candidate recruitment and selection can be an important factor in the design of a principal-development programme, affecting the quality, diversity, and experience of programme participants (McCarthy and Forsyth, 2009). The individuals who enter a programme determine to a great extent what the programme can build on, what kind of curriculum can be effective, and what kind of a leader can emerge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Although these findings highlight the importance of selection criteria in leadership development programmes, the selection of school principals in Cyprus is based on criteria that reflect the values and beliefs of the senior MOEC personnel who are responsible for selection. This practically suggests that selection regimes in Cyprus generate particular occupational profiles. This is because these regimes fail to recruit excellent teachers who have strong instructional backgrounds and leadership potential. Unfortunately, the recruitment and selection processes that Cyprus has in place are inadequate for developing new leaders for new schools.

Principals believed that there is little attempt from MOEC to recruit selectively or to screen vigorously any potential candidates for the programme. To achieve better results among principals, principals suggested that the selection criteria need to be expanded beyond typical degree credentials and teaching experience in order to include a different skill set – interpersonal competencies related to managing up, laterally, and in congruence with diversity goals. Because all teachers have a record with strong instructional practice, teaching effectiveness is no longer an adequate selection criterion. Principals also stated that the programme fails to select candidates who demonstrate commitment, are passionate, hard working, and have a desire to work in high-need, diverse settings. With schools becoming more diverse and complex principals also pointed out that educators interested in leadership positions need to value collaboration and acquiring new knowledge.

Currently, assistant principals that do not possess a Masters degree cannot be

## Chapter Six: Leadership Development and Policy Issues

promoted into leadership positions. Similarly, it is difficult now for teachers to be promoted into assistant principals without the possession of a Masters degree. Although the possession of Masters degrees is highly desirable, principals have questioned the necessity for such degrees. In particular they noted that universities are unlikely to prepare school leaders as professional practitioners, but rather as graduate students. This finding is consistent with assertions by McCarthy and Forsyth (2009), who suggest that:

Universities admit individuals to graduate study, not the profession, and thus their interests are in assessing the likelihood of applicant success in graduate school, not school leadership. (pp. 89–90)

These findings are also reflected in principals' response to finding and developing the next generation of talents. One principal explained:

In my five years of experience as a principal in this school I know four people who I believe that they would not only be good leaders but also they would do a good job at the school. With the system as it is they might not ever get promoted [into leadership positions]...currently principal positions have been taken up by rather young people and it would take a lot of years till these positions empty...

Similarly other principals noted that they 'see who the right ones are but others get the promotion.' Principals noted that in the processes of selection they could refer excellent teachers with leadership potential who are committed to educational change.

Participants also suggested vigorous selection methods for selecting principal candidates such as tests on instructional knowledge, case-study analysis, and role-plays. Some others also pointed out that programmes could include observations of candidates as they lead instruction with adults and/or children, because the ability to lead professional learning is a key component of leadership.

### 6.1.2 Curriculum Content

Principals suggested that the material covered in the seminars was inapplicable in the Cyprus context and realities. In fact the development programme has managed to create a complicated content. They also pointed out that the leadership programme offers a wide range of competency-based leadership models and this has made them more complex. As one stated 'we can't possibly concentrate on all those behaviours being taught.' Although the programme has been built around multiple competencies, it did not capture the complex reality of leadership. Another limitation of the programme highlighted was its strong basis on an idealised concept of leadership. It was rather impossible to find outstanding examples of the full range of leadership behaviours that the Cypriot model promotes. It reinforced the notion of a 'perfect' leader, and such an individual rarely exists in reality. I would suggest that an effective leader cannot be defined around nine or ten behavioural dimensions because they risk oversimplifying a highly complex role.

Participants have also admitted the danger of uncritically imitating educational strategies from Greece, let alone rushing into the exportation of culturally responsive practices. This resulted in most educators being sceptical when they attended workshops and seminars organised by colleagues coming from other countries. I would suggest that these preferences are the result of differences in school cultures that are, in their turn, determined mainly by specific features of every school, local cultural traditions, prejudices, and misconceptions of the local population.

Participants also noted that the programme gives insufficient attention to equity, instruction, and linkages between preparation and what they actually do on the job. In particular, the programme has been referred to as outdated, lacking clear focus or purpose, fragmented and overlapping, without a continuum of knowledge and skills, containing weak clinical components, lacking rigor, and unrelated to administrative roles. These findings hint at the centrality of

programmes that provide focused, organised curriculums around a progressive vision of schools that emphasises equity and excellence. Unless programme philosophies become clearly articulated, leaders will not manage to reconcile the competing interests that inevitably arise when diverse relationships, conflict, and negotiations also arise.

Literature has provided various recommendations regarding educational inequities and societal issues as an integral part of leadership development programmes (McKenzie, Skrla and Scheurich, 2006). For instance, Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) recommended that the leadership programmes include 'new' concepts of schooling aimed at social purpose. Similarly, the participants emphasised that concepts of privilege, racism, power, ethnicity, social purpose, spirituality, and related topics are lacking from the current programme. The lack of focus on societal and cultural influences in schools was a frequently reported content specialisation by principals. Future leadership programmes could include a thorough history of social inequities, such as racial discrimination and homophobia, and the impact of social, political, and economic forces on education and student learning.

The leadership programme seems to give insufficient focus on the various instructional methods that are needed to ensure the academic success of diverse learners. The programme pays inadequate attention on the centrality of student learning. Principals emphasised the need for a redesigned content of their preparation programmes based on a new conception of leadership from plant manager to educational leader. They also called for a strong curriculum with an instructional focus to help them transform diverse, low-performing schools. I would suggest that providing detailed descriptions of the powerful role of leadership in ensuring access to strong instructional techniques is a vital leadership development component. In promoting equity-oriented teaching strategies, principals also stressed that the need for future leadership development programmes could focus on the impact of expectations on student learning. The literature review above has overly illustrated the role of staff's

expectations on the learning ability of their students. However, the leadership programme still fails to provide specific staff behaviours and instructional practices that would serve as evidence of high expectations.

In developing equity and excellence principals emphasised the need for a focused leadership development programme, which begins with a focus on adult development and organisational development, laying a foundation for the principal's job as a leader of a professional and organisational learning team and community building. Principals, for example, stated that the leadership programme pays inadequate attention to the processes or the 'how' to foster teaching and learning for adults and students. Additionally, the programme offered no support in developing authentic conversation with diverse groups of people. Principals noted that school stakeholders could no longer afford to fall behind in promoting this core competence. Programmes that focused on establishing strong, explicit norms that encourage collaborative informative gatherings and disclosure could help principals develop relationships with diverse groups of people. For instance, the programme could engage a parent and his or her school leader in 'authentic' conversations focused on perspective-taking and understanding one another's communication style and decision-making skills. Such negotiation training is lacking and as a result organisational members fail to engage in negotiation behaviours with minority groups. These findings suggest that such processes could break down the barriers that prevent different ethnic groups from establishing a relationship that would support the academic achievement of students.

Apart from principal's suggestions about curriculum context, the study suggests that those involved in classroom-based training and development include the six leadership practices described in the earlier chapter. Thus to develop effective leadership, training in all leadership practices and delivering content relevant to each stage in the leadership pipeline become essential. Even if these elements are embedded in leadership development programmes, the question of how to deliver these knowledge and skills still remains. Below I highlight some of principals'

suggestions given regarding the delivery of these skills.

### 6.1.3 Fieldwork

According to principals, teaching leadership in classrooms does little to enhance the practice of leadership. In fact, none of the school principals attributed their confidence and level of preparation to their preparation experiences. All principals reported that travelling to the Pedagogical Institute every Friday afternoon is not worth the effort. The programme overemphasises science, in the form of analysis and technique, and downplays experience and insight. In other words, the programme places a weak connection between theory and practice. However, this lack of connectedness posed major problems for many principals. As one principal put it:

Future design programmes need to concentrate on usefulness. I have no tolerance for the theories unless they function in practice. Principals go to work every day to support, motivate, and guide teachers who face a myriad of issues. Principals need practical skills that will allow them to diagnose the needs of their schools.

Principals also stressed that the programme gave them a distorted impression that leadership consists entirely of applying formulas in order to solve complex situations. As the results above illustrate, an effective leader could not possibly be a sum of a set of competencies. Unfortunately, the leadership model that the Pedagogical Institute promotes does not reflect the reality of the leader's world. Principals reported that once they returned to real settings, they discovered that their learning was little appreciated or understood by others. These results indicate that an individual's learning is inseparable from the collective learning of their work group.

Principals also reported the need for ongoing professional development once in the field. . They questioned the coherence and comprehensiveness of the learning experiences before and after the programme. My analysis showed that nobody

claims responsibility for learning or that learning continues after the programme is over. Thus once the programme ends, there are few additional experiences to reinforce learning or ongoing programmes of feedback to gauge principals' development efforts regarding specific leadership competencies. A dilemma faced by principals was the lack of reinforcement for exhibiting the leadership behaviours taught in the programme. They reported that once they returned to their schools there were no extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for exhibiting those behaviours. The principals recommended that through coaching and feedback leadership behaviours could be reinforced.

Principals differed in their learning styles. Some principals reported that they learn best from experiential exercises, while others do so from reflective methods, and still others from traditional classroom methods. The findings indicate that multiple learning methods increase the likelihood that at least one method is compatible with a principal's individual style. Principals also reported that learning structured in extended periods is more valuable because infrequent exposure over the course of one year has not increased the probability of effecting change in their behaviour and perspectives. Principals reported that training built around a few days of practice may not be sufficient. Instead focused, deliberate, and repeated practice over longer periods was more likely to be successful.

The transition from theory to practice requires significant resources and time commitments in an arena that has been often viewed as an add-on to institution-based school preparation. Although leadership development takes place in the first year of principalship, the theory taught at the Pedagogical Institute is not related to what is actually happening in principal's schools. The Pedagogical Institute has yet to be persuaded of the cost-benefit of intensive field preparation and mentored transition into practice. Thus, courses taken at the Pedagogical Institute are not taught alongside and in relation to closely integrated practice or fieldwork. Interviews provided support for courses that are wrapped around reinforcing clinical experiences that illustrate the principles under study. Other

leadership programmes, e.g. in the UK, require participants to maintain a record in which they document critical incidents, challenges, and discoveries and reflect on how these experiences have shaped their leadership development (Bush, 2008). Principals have also suggested a number of ways to connect theory and practice, namely through cohort groups, problem solving, mentoring, and robust internships. These findings are illustrated in more detail below.

#### **6.1.3.1 Cohort Groups**

Principals have called for structures that will enable more collaboration, teamwork, and mutual support. Principals noted that Friday afternoon programmes do not offer opportunities for them to turn to one another for learning and resources. The reality is that collegial networks and cohort groups have not been given any attention by the Pedagogical Institute. Cohort groups, as an additional programme component, could create collaborative learning relationships among peers that they can rely on to share experiences and knowledge to solve problems. As one principal noted 'I can't remember when was the last time I shared my knowledge.' Thus, giving a forum to principals for collectively reflecting on their leadership development can be highly beneficial. Programmes around the world, such as the NCSL, as well as university-based programmes, have recognised the need to provide these kinds of educational and relational supports to school leaders (McCarthy and Forsyth, 2009). These findings are consistent with 'cohort models' of leadership preparation which 'involve a group of students who begin and complete a programme of studies together, engaging in a common set of courses, activities, and/or learning experiences' (Barnett and Muse, 1993, p. 401). This study proposes that the ability of students to communicate what they are learning both solidifies their own understanding and could aid in the learning of others.

#### **6.1.3.2 Problem-Based Learning (PBL)**

Previous chapters have highlighted principals' dealings with conflict and teachers' resistance to change to meet students' diverse needs. Principals highlighted the need for candidates to work in groups solving complex problems



related to diversity issues – in other words problem-based learning (PBL). Principals noted that PBL techniques could encourage future candidates to use their own words when recognising and approaching complex problems. PBL could also stimulate candidates' ingenuity while making them accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and to be 'knowledgeable'. Examining the cognitive underpinnings of PBL, Bridges and Hallinger (1997) report similar findings. They note that, as a process, PBL activates prior knowledge, creates realistic context, and encourages the elaboration of newly acquired knowledge. This study extends these findings and proposes that PBL could facilitate the development of mental complexity, the encouragement of a variety of ways of thinking, and the filtering of good information.

### **6.1.3.3 Internships**

The principals reported that internships could also provide opportunities to promote equity and change in diverse schools as well as to merge theory, research, and practice. My analysis also illustrated more espoused outcomes from internships including identification of problems and solutions aimed at school improvement and students' achievement; gained insights and awareness about the duties of administrators; and increased commitment to and understanding of a career in school leadership. Principals also emphasised that authentic working contexts can assure adequate complexity of leading to the learning processes required.

I would suggest that successful programmes are not only those that guarantee a 'leadership for equity and excellence' stance, but also those that ensure the infusion of that stance in candidates' field experiences. Although this aspect of preparation has been overlooked in many leadership preparation programmes (Pounder, Reitzung and Young, 2002), the principals in the current study have noted that authentic multicultural experiences could also be acquired through internships. In addition, for many prospective schools leaders, these internship experiences could provide principals with an early opportunity to 'try on' elements of the principal's role in diverse contexts. Principals noted that coupling

internships with an ongoing reflective seminar could provide them with a forum for sharing and sense making that could in turn deepen the experience.

This study's findings illustrate the importance of placing principals in real settings. The principal at Ares noted that the MOEC has responsibility in placing the future principal in the school for couple of months prior to his departure. But placing principals to train in diverse schools that suffer from the typical shortcomings many such schools face has the potential of strengthening their pre-service stereotypes towards children. In contrast, placing principals in successful professional development settings can stimulate candidates' examination and learning. These findings indicate the importance of developing principals in real settings without asking them to imagine what they have never seen or to suggest that they do the opposite of what they have observed in the classroom.

### **6.2.3.4 Mentoring**

Both principals and teachers noted the importance of placing mentors in schools helping staff at all levels. While working with mentors, one principal reported that he can 'complete a variety of projects designed to apply in practice concepts from classroom teaching'. These findings resemble observations from earlier studies describing mentoring as a 'complex interactive process between persons with different levels of experience and expertise, which stimulates interpersonal and psycho-social development' (Huber, 2008, p. 173). Similarly, Southworth (1995) notes that the use of mentors helps new leaders overcome isolation and allows the pair (mentor and mentee) to 'consider and reconsider' events. However, the present findings emphasise the quality of mentors in developing leaders. They recommended the placement of interns next to an experienced, effective principal working in diverse schools. As one principal noted:

It would take another 7 years for a new principal to learn what I have learned. And I doubt that he will be able to lead change in the school without this prior experience or training. The placement of a new principal

next to an effective schools principal who finds satisfaction in passing on knowledge could be highly beneficial.

The selection of effective principals who are willing to engage in learning processes, therefore, becomes important. According to one principal 'these principals could be selected on the criterion that they find satisfaction in passing on knowledge'. These findings illustrate the importance of mentor selection and mentor scaffolding opportunities for interns as a key to in-depth learning. I would suggest that programmes should include mentoring leaders to do better preparation for schools in the future rather than socialising a new generation of leaders of the past.

### **6.1.4 The Incorporation of Self-Awareness in the Curriculum**

An emphasis on cognition is another important focus of the curriculum in leadership development programmes recommended by principals. The cognitive perspective suggests that what we believe, what we value, and what we think are reflected in action. This perspective is reflected on attention to the development of self-awareness skills. In Cyprus the introduction of ZEPs and other attempts towards structural reforms cannot promote nor develop equity and excellence without meaningful change in underlying beliefs. Sergiovanni (1991) states that the 'theoretical and technical practices have not worked [and] educational research and administrative theory constructed in the past decades have failed' (p. 39). Diverse successful schools, as has been shown, require something more than incorporating new technical skills into their mind-set. Instead, they require a more sophisticated stage of mental development in order to transform and change. My analysis showed that principals in diverse schools go through complex demands while learning and becoming more complex to deal with them. In the process, they become more self-aware in recognising failings, more conscious of the part they play, and more concerned about the problems of minority groups.

The work of principals in diverse schools became complex and difficult as

people from the past, community, colleagues, and students shaped and continue to shape who they are. These categories were shown to pull principals in multiple directions. For example, the principal at Ares noted that his family and community has shaped how he sees Turkish-Cypriots. At the same time the school was asking him for an honest and professional relationship with Turkish-Cypriot students and their parents. Thus his students, his community, and ancestor loyalties pulled him into two different directions. He could hear the voice of his children urging him not to work in a school packed with 'Turks who killed our grandfather'. At the same time, he could see the love and affection of Turkish-Cypriot students towards himself. The ideas and values that defined his community came in strong contrast with his work in schools. Prioritising his values became an essential step in exercising effective leadership and working towards a social purpose. If he let his family's values define who he really was and what he was supposed to do, he wouldn't have worked in the school and his mental complexity would have remained the same. By prioritising he became able to identify those values that were holding him and inhibiting his leadership. I would suggest that apart from knowing themselves and their values well, principals often pick up an element of the problem that stems from what he or she believes or how he or she behaves and also from the values that are holding him and her.

These findings are consistent with previous claims that self-awareness has great implications in the process of leadership development. Research studying the 'unconscious' and its implicit effect in organisations (Barsade, Ramarajan and Westen, 2009; Fazio et al., 1995; Greenwald et al., 2002) posit that people are not consciously aware of having affective reactions or attitudes which have an influence on their cognitions, motivation, and behaviours. There is also some preliminary evidence that simply making people aware of these implicit processes is sufficient to change their emotions, cognitions, and behaviours. For example, Diamond and Allcorn (2003) describe an organisational consulting project in which the client had overly positive and dysfunctional transferences to the consultants (who were going to 'save' the client), which then shifted to

extremely negative and dysfunctional transferences (the consultants 'betrayed' the client) (Lane et al., 2007). In the future leadership development programmes could develop a range of measures to assess 'hidden' attitudes and beliefs.

The findings indicated that remaining influenced by deeply held loyalties and values and with decreased levels of mental complexity puts leadership in danger. Exercising leadership for equity and excellence requires not only understanding the larger system but also themselves in their full complexity. Similarly, Kumagai and Lypson (2009) warn against a 'singular focus on the self, [towards] a stepping back to understand one's own assumptions, biases, and values and a shifting of one's gaze from self to others and conditions of injustice in the world' (p. 282). Thus, the object of knowledge moves beyond a list of attributes (which can quickly degrade into dehumanising stereotypes) when encountering different groups. My analysis showed that the current programme assumes the transmission of an authoritative body of knowledge that principals are supposed consume without critical attention. However, the principals in the current study were found exploring their identities as transformative intellectuals and not as producers and consumers of dominant discourse and practices.

Another great challenge facing leadership development, it was revealed, was teaching candidates to advocate and care for individuals who may be very different from themselves. As was seen in the previous chapter, principals included the use of stories in the interviews and in observations within the schools. Principals' stories were found in teachers' interviews. It seems that stories provided immediacy and relevance to issues of equity and affected perspectives in subtle, but important, ways. The use of narratives or stories in this context is particularly relevant, because they may engage candidates in experiential, cognitive, and affective domains, allow for a 'constructive engagement with otherness', foster perspective taking, and enhance empathetic connections with others. It can be concluded that professional programmes could include stories to put a human face on cultural conflicts, personal biases and perspectives in the school setting.

Findings also suggest through dialogue people can view and listen to each other's values, perspectives and biases in a safe and comfortable setting. At Leander, Elpida encouraged school members to share their experiences and struggles, which in turn created feelings of interdependence and pleasure guiding their work. In addition, dialogues which are engaging, interactive, and honest can bring contentious social issues of relevance to the practice of schooling and leadership. At Athena, where the principal avoided a traditional top-down approach in decision-making, teachers were more likely to express their deeply held beliefs than the rest of the schools. Another critical element that development programmes could add into their curriculum then is dialogue. It seems that principals or instructors in leadership development programmes could aim to facilitate exchanges rather than lectures to stimulate awareness and reflection of personal loyalties, values, biases, and perspectives. However, my analysis showed that dialogue could also validate monocultural stances. Without critical awareness about one's cultural beliefs, dialogues seemed to confirm taken-for-granted assumptions. Successful dialogue, however, could provide candidates with knowledge about being white principals.

Equity could not be achieved just by hearing minorities' distressful experiences. While principals pointed out that they spent considerable time listening to minority groups, pointing out to them their differences, these practices could not possibly constitute leadership development alone. Although empathic connections through stories were found to be critical, arising empathy without simultaneously stimulating reflection and awareness on one's own biases, privileges, and assumptions, they would not yield effective actions from the part of the reader or listener. The four case studies showed that a significant learning and personal growth occurs when one encounters an experience, idea, perspective, or identity with which one is unfamiliar. This is true as the principals who worked in the predominantly minority schools showed developmental changes, which were the result of experiences, difficulties, and hardships that they went through. Trigger events constituted dramatic and

sometimes subtle changes in the individual's circumstances that facilitated personal growth and development. I would suggest that in organisational settings, trigger events may arise from internal or external sources that challenge leaders' abilities requiring innovative and unconventional solutions. Thus, trigger events could serve as catalysts for heightened levels of leader self-awareness.

The principal at Athena, as was discussed in the previous chapter, personalised situations by placing himself in diverse groups' shoes in making decisions for his school. In promoting empathy Marcos fostered a development of perspective taking; putting oneself in the other's place; seeing the world through the other's eyes, feeling the other's emotions; and behaving as the other would behave in a particular situation. In turn, as followers observed Marcos displaying an understanding of self-awareness and engaging in transparent decision-making that reflects integrity and a commitment to core ethical values, they developed trust in him. Thus future candidate's awareness development programmes could include questions such as 'How would you feel or what would you do if you encountered such a situation?'. I would suggest that this learning illuminates the meaning of conflict and promotes understanding and cooperation among different ethnic groups.

### **6.2 Institutionalising Collaborative Professional Learning**

Collaborative professional learning (CPL) is an important process through which education leaders and practitioners were found to develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like and what schools need to do to support it. The first two sections below define and give advantages of CPL. The final section outlines the conditions necessary to foster CPL and explains how CPL principles lead to more effective learning and leadership practices.

### **6.2.1 Collaborative Professional Learning**

Considering the complex realities in diverse schools, the MOEC can no longer afford to search for 'charismatic saviours' to work in diverse schools. Currently, leaders working in diverse schools are seen by the MOEC as all-powerful heroes expected to meet the complex needs of their schools. The cause for the principal's 'effectiveness' is believed to be his or her leadership characteristics or traits – traits that can be selected for but cannot be developed on the job. Evidence suggests that these perceptions make it difficult for principals to meet these high expectations, especially when coupled with the inadequate training that principals in Cyprus receive both prior to and on the job. Indeed, the constant requests of principals to be removed from such schools and placed elsewhere is an indicator of the mismatch between expectations and support.

The findings of this study suggest that leadership rarely plays out at only the individual level. Leadership was found to be a complex, dynamic process in which action could be taken up by multiple individuals and exchanged across individuals in different hierarchical levels. This exchange and the selective and dynamic emergence of individuals whose skills and expertise are most appropriate to a given situation was found to be the crux of leadership for equity and excellence.

CPL did not only involve problem-solving techniques. When individuals engaged in problem-solving episodes they were not necessarily connected to others. In contrast, CPL occurred when the events were connected, individually and collectively, and by reflection not only on the solutions to specific problems but also on improving the learning that enables solutions to emerge. The data also revealed that CPL is most likely to occur in schools in which stakeholders go through change in their current mind-sets. These results show that if principals are to learn and reflect only, the changes they hope for, or that others need from them, will not happen because all the learning and reflecting will occur within their existing mind-sets. These findings resemble observations from



earlier studies. In particular Day (1997) explains that:

....reflection itself is a necessary but not sufficient condition for learning. Confrontation by self or others must occur. And for this to be effective, these others must be skilled, trusted colleagues who are knowledgeable about and experienced in reflection in, on and *about* the action. (p.195)

Similarly, this research suggests that CPL will occur only when members are increasingly self-aware and prioritise the values that are inhibiting them as well as their unspoken collective tendencies that protect themselves from the very progress they seek to make. Below I describe the challenges and opportunities that were found to pertain to CPL work.

### **6.2.2 Opportunities and Challenges of CPL**

Schools failed to provide time for regular collaboration among teachers on issues of instruction. In fact, teachers reported having no time for CPL. Schools that had highly effective learning processes were more likely to maintain viability and flourish in diverse environments. I would suggest that compulsory, traditional in-service training is no longer adequate and waits to be replaced with longer-term programmes and professional development opportunities. However, data also showed that organisations' ability to learn and adapt to threats and opportunities is inherently complex in that it involves CPL with varied and often conflicting individuals, groups, cultures, and processes. Conflict among stakeholders about objectives and priorities for the school yields further disagreements about what type of learning to encourage and what new knowledge to implement. Leadership could therefore facilitate CPL by building a culture of shared values for learning and flexibility.

Another obstacle to CPL was the common belief that the responsibility for leading change and innovation lies with top management. By looking at the organisational hierarchy of each school, the level of change innovativeness in organisations could easily be found. But Cyprus's centralised system encourages

a top-down approach to innovation, rather than a collaborative approach that includes emergent processes. Interviews demonstrated that leaders' ability to directly control complex organisational dynamics was difficult. However, leaders were found to direct those dynamics towards experimentation and learning by setting the proper conditions and fostering learning-oriented behaviours and activities of members. These leaders made others more effective and did not sit and wait for top management to do it. Still, cultivating the next generation of leaders is not one of the primary leadership roles of Cyprus's school principals. Because leaders fail to invest in tomorrow's talent to build for the future, people continue to solve their problems on their own instead of asking for help.

CPL was found to occupy a place in the current conception of how to help complex diverse schools to get better. By CPL school leaders eliminated schools' isolation and therefore reduced the variability between classrooms in regards the level of engagement of students and teachers in their classrooms. The problem of variability in practice and engagement among classrooms can be explained by the amount of individual learning and commitment one puts into his or her work. The teacher at Ares noted that she owes her genuine efforts to the fact that she has no family commitments to attend to and therefore this leaves her with considerable but necessary amounts of time and energy to focus on individual development. If this is what all schools ought to be doing, then the best that leaders or MOEC can do is offer teachers the best professional development programme to reduce the current classroom variabilities that exist in schools. However, this is unlikely to work if teachers enrolled in such programmes pay little attention to the cumulative effect of their learning on the organisation as a whole. Teachers' insistence on individualised practices has been noted by several principals as the most common but harmful practice to school improvement. These findings suggest that taking an individualised model of professional development does not lead to cumulative improvement in schools, but may in fact aggravate the problem of variability in practice among classrooms.

These results indicate that making the transition from highly individualised

practices of learning and professional development to more collective practices which aim at cumulative school improvement at scale requires educators to move from thinking of learning from an individual process to a collective one. While individual learning in diverse schools was found to be crucial, it is the accumulation of that learning across classrooms and schools that improves the overall learning and student performance. The results show that schools are better off cultivating teachers who simultaneously deliver results in their own job and deliver results by collaborating across the school. Leaders who embarked on a process of transforming their schools from a highly siloed and entrepreneurial culture into more collaborative organisations managed to see more differences in their students' learning. In addition, in schools where school leaders promoted shared time and productive working relationships, teachers showed more willingness to share practices and try new ways of teaching and achieved more success in solving problems of practice. Such productive professional communities were more likely to be found in densely diverse schools because, as the principals noted, teachers had to talk about problems and release their feelings. The great number of students provided more opportunities to learn and a greater desire to continuously develop more effective practices.

Based on these findings, it appears that knowledge work requires people to make concurrent collaborative decisions in response to unforeseen, novel, complex problems. Through collaboration school faculty was more likely to produce change than individuals working in isolation. Principals reported that teachers who taught in isolation determined their own curriculum and pedagogy, measured student progress idiosyncratically and unconnectedly, and were the sole arbiters of who passed and progressed to the next grade level and who did not. In overcoming these obstacles to learning, they encouraged teacher teaming to break up isolation and promoted collaboration. The principal at Athena went further and stressed that only when teachers get out of their classrooms to observe other teachers and have shared planning and learning time can real collaboration take place. This practically suggests that collaboration in the context of diverse schools is not so much about empowering people but more

about helping people to work together. However, this does not mean that leaders are to work collaboratively all the time across the school while failing to do well in their own jobs. They care about individual performance while making school-wide contributions through collaboration.

Further evidence suggests that another CPL challenge is finding and developing the next-generation school leaders able to lead in diverse schools. School principals emphasised the need for having the right people in the right places at the right time with the right skills. School principals do not have the autonomy to recruit well-prepared teachers needed to teach in diverse schools. But, as the data suggest, the identification and selection of the right people is imperative to learning initiatives. The significance of having a group of people with core cultural competencies and social capabilities that are engaged in CPL was highlighted. Research also showed that leaders tended to focus their resources on individuals with greater levels of social influence. These findings suggest that when a principal places the most capable players in the right position, the principal is likely to deliver outcomes that matter most and is likely to help his or her best talent to engage in creating culturally responsive initiatives and actions. Leaders who purposively developed and ensured that the key people occupy the key positions helped learning initiatives in multiple ways. First, they were more likely to impact communication flow between different organisational levels. Second, such 'gatekeepers' were often informal organisational leaders, and their informal power often gave them access to sectors of social networks that formal leaders could not reach. These findings suggest that leaders who develop people in key positions have the greatest influence on the diffusion of knowledge. In general their position and centrality determine the extent to which they are socially connected to others and which in turn moderates their influence and power. These findings propose that followers can encourage the formation of new linkages between followers in other key positions.

### **6.2.3 Professional-Learning Principles**

Several practices can help principals institutionalise CPL for their organisation or team. Institutionalising learning was found to be based on a set of professional-learning principles. Below some of these principles are illustrated:

#### **6.2.3.1 Internal Accountability**

The study demonstrated two reasons why people avoid CPL. First, the vital problem in collective work is that people working in groups or teams can shrink and get by because individual output is not being measured, only team output. Second, the problem lies in external accountability. Teachers and principals, for example, talked openly about the need to follow the guidelines of the MOEC, even if they disagreed with them. They felt that there is no point in resisting, so they got on with the work as usual. More successful schools, however, found the antidote to these malaises, which was a high degree of internal accountability. Internal accountability was important because of the tendency to hide behind MOEC's mandates and the collective. Leaders who took responsibility for diversity challenges held themselves as well as others accountable. Although CPL often led to diffusion of responsibility, success happened when school leaders spoke about their own need to learn new skills to support students to achieve. These findings suggest that internal accountability involves leaders themselves adopting the disposition of learners and then holding their colleagues to increasingly rich levels of practice and inquiry. Thus, leaders who promote CPL demand that others be held accountable. After all, collaborative work involves different people with each one responsible for his or her part. School leaders that hold others accountable stop blaming others for underachievement.

#### **6.2.3.2 Trust and Psychological Safety**

This research has demonstrated that CPL requires a safe place in which people can share their questions and understanding without fear of being judged harshly by their peers or their supervisors. It was found that in the absence of these conditions, people in organisations tend to suppress important information especially about sensitive issues such as diversity. Instead, schools with a history

of reliable, mutually supportive relationships create conditions for many teachers and principals to expose their practice to the scrutiny of others.

Case studies demonstrated that effective leaders provide schools which ask for risks, experiments, and constructive ideas with the necessary psychological safety. In particular, it was found that work environments, such as these found in the four schools, are a central source of positive states and experiences such as satisfaction, enrichment, development, and growth. Thus, psychological safety is crucial, especially in these environments where knowledge constantly changes, where workers need to collaborate, and where those workers are asked to make wise decisions without management intervention. In the same way that being 'nice' and 'caring' is not an effective way to lead diversity, neither psychological safety is about being nice. Instead, psychological safety makes it possible to give tough feedback and have difficult conversations – which demand trust and respect – without the need to tiptoe around the truth. If psychological safety is so important and if the 'role of headteacher is to create and sustain an emotional climate for learning in the school, more attention will have to be paid to how they, in turn, are nurtured and encouraged, as well as monitored and evaluated' (Crawford, 2009, p. 138).

### **6.3 Policy for Equity and Excellence**

This section describes the kind of policies that may need to be introduced to help schools care more effectively for students. Some policies introduced by the ZEP have made a substantial difference in schools including smaller classes and increased instructional support. The ZEP enabled smaller class sizes and reduced pupil loads for teachers. The schools' allocation of resources to core instructional functions created structures that allowed teachers to care effectively for their students. By knowing students well, teachers were more able to tailor instruction so students' strengths, needs, experiences, and developing interests. Moreover, ZEP has provided schools with a variety of supports to help students negotiate the demands. Almost all schools under the ZEP made time available before or

after school so that students obtained peer-tutoring. This section points out to several other goals that policy has to pay attention to – meaningful learning through standards, curriculum and assessment, closing principals' autonomy gap, and introduction of incentives.

### **6.3.1 Meaningful Learning: Standards, Curriculum, Assessment**

Principals reported that diverse schools need an ambitious and coherent instructional programme that enables students to overcome barriers to access that are often associated with race, poverty, language, or initially low academic skills. The present curriculum was found to be neither challenging nor engaging to students attending diverse schools. Despite the fact that certain schools had the rather 'quiet' freedom to work out their own curriculum, core disciplinary concepts were missing from teaching. Evidence suggests that the mastery of basic skills is no longer sufficient to prepare students to live and succeed in a global economy.

It was clear that in the two predominantly minority schools, principals and teachers had no clear content standards for student learning and, as a result, teachers could not clarify what students could know and be able to do. Although the MOEC has made standards more flexible for these schools, it has failed to make them clear and transparent. In contrast, in the two diverse schools, mere coverage of a highly prescriptive curriculum placed teachers in classrooms covering dozens of objectives in each subject area at each grade level. Instead, principals reported that they favour standards that specify a smaller number of major concepts or topics. They also reported the need for standards to become more transparent, so that students know what skills they are expected to develop and how they will have to be demonstrated.

The findings also suggest that learning to perform complex tasks in other curriculum subjects continues to rely heavily on academic language skills. Yet, in many classrooms across Cyprus, many minority students struggle to

understand much of the language that is used in those classrooms and in the curricular materials, and most learners are not explicitly taught to read, write, or speak in the particular topic language. Furthermore, findings demonstrate that teachers lack the capacity to teach. But if a new curriculum is to be recommended, then the MOEC will have to tailor teacher professional development to the chosen curricula and provide teaching guidelines for teachers throughout the system. Staff development was a key factor highlighted by school leaders in their efforts to build schools' capacity to implement the reforms. In the same way that schools differ and require effective and targeted support from all stakeholders, the same applies to school classrooms.

Clear standards and curriculum guidance in conjunction with local performance assessments could encourage and support more equitable and ambitious learning. Teachers can appropriately differentiate instruction after mastering data-driven decision-making. Instead of relying on anecdotal evidence, high-quality informative assessments could provide teachers with a detailed picture of individual student needs. Interpreting and using data as a guide, effective teachers will know where their students are, create a clear vision for where they need to be, and develop academic trajectories for each student to achieve success. However, this could raise serious problems on the appropriateness of these tests. I would suggest that Greek-language learners require more sophisticated measures to show what they know and more sensitive accountability tools to monitor their progress. Again professional development would be required to ensure that teachers understand how the assessments relate to what they should be teaching, and how to make changes in their approach based on the results they see.

Black and Jones (2006) have proposed another kind of assessment, that of formative assessment which 'can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged' (p. 4). They also noted that in foreign language classrooms, formative



assessments are of particular use as they can help teachers go through the rich information that arises in classroom activities, and thus provide them with professional judgement about future practices. However, successful implementation of formative assessment depends on teachers' knowledge, skills, and strategies that they use to carry out complex pedagogical processes (Webb and Jones, 2009). Given the importance of formative assessment in enhancing student's learning and the low expectations that teachers' held towards diverse students, teachers could go through training to implement formative assessments in their classrooms.

### **6.3.2 Closing the Autonomy Gap**

Although the need for strong, well-prepared school leaders was highly recognised, principals lacked the authority necessary to exercise strong leadership. Simply stated, it was clear that school leaders did not have the flexibility they need to respond to diversity challenges. Their hands were tied by government regulations and mandates. By 'autonomy gap' I refer to the difference between the amount of authority that school principals think they need in order to be effective leaders and the amount they actually have. Case studies confirmed the importance of authority over their personnel, their budgets, and key parts of their instructional programmes in order to enable them to succeed in meeting diversity.

Principals described a lack of authority over functions that they themselves regard as critical to raising student achievement, especially school staffing. Because they are bound by government's policies, they have a relatively free hand in hiring the best person for the job, discharging unsuitable staff, assigning teachers where they are most needed, and otherwise exerting strong school leadership. Yet rather than decrying these constraints it was also found that some principals accepted these limits as immutable realities associated with their jobs. Instead of battling them, principals developed tactics to work with, through, or around them. The tactics differed depending upon the principal and the local

context, but the common denominator was developing positive working relationships inside and outside the school building. In other words, knowing the right people and knowing how to work the system. This tolerance for the system exists because having come up through the ranks of public education as it is, principals cannot readily imagine a different system. Moreover, they were elevated to the principalship in part because they functioned well within the system. Those who resisted tolerance knew well how to bend a rule without breaking it, allowing them to be effective, at least by their own lights, within the system as it stands.

Squeezed between policies, procedures, and obligations on one side, and classroom teachers on the other, the principals interviewed sometimes saw themselves as middle managers, not as leaders developing equity and excellence per se. They reported finding themselves balancing the challenge of maintaining a school climate that is conducive to teaching and learning with the need to accommodate the outside pressures, reporting requirements, and demands of MOEC. The advantage of giving principals more autonomy lies in the fact that principals know the needs of their schools and thereby reduce the necessity for central-office oversight. As principals reported, 'faraway bureaucrats in central offices are in a poor position to know what should be done in each of a hundred schools'. Thus local autonomy is essential to success in education.

### **6.3.3 Using Incentives**

In recent years it has been proved difficult to keep teachers in diverse schools. As a result the MOEC has recently announced that teachers going to work in diverse schools will receive incentives. The rationale is that teams assigned to manage multicultural programmes split when teachers decide to leave the schools and as a result programmes organised by the particular team come to an end unexpectedly and prior to completion. Thus, the new compensation aims to keep top teachers leaving diverse schools. In other countries, such as the UK, compensation changes have been made so as to improve teacher effectiveness.

## Chapter Six: Leadership Development and Policy Issues

Compensation systems have several advantages: they pay highly effective teachers considerably more money, they are based on performance rather than longevity, and make it possible for them to reach the top of the salary scale within seven to eight years rather than up to thirty.

These objectives, however, pose a number of problems. MOEC's recommended policy neglects teacher effectiveness. For instance, if an ineffective teacher remains in a diverse school the school would be in a worse condition than it was prior to incentives. The placement of such incentives is likely to be quite inefficient if not harmful. The findings suggest the significance of placing effective teachers in schools that need them most. But the problem that arises from this argument is how readily can we identify effective teachers? And, perhaps most crucially, what are promising strategies for seeking to increase the number of effective teachers in high-poverty schools and communities? The study emphasises the importance of identifying the strongest teachers and assigning them to the schools who need their expertise the most.

Higher pay alone, however, might not be enough to solve the problem. Some principals noted that in the absence of better working conditions, the MOEC will fail to attract and retain teachers in high-need schools. Teachers placed great value on a positive and supportive working environment characterised by strong leadership and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. These findings are consistent with research conducted by Menon and Saitis (2006), which showed that teachers, even though they are satisfied with the money they receive, are not particularly satisfied with their job. This study highlights the centrality of being satisfied with one's work, as well as the positive consequences associated with coming to work and remaining part of the school. Their current dissatisfaction was an indicator of their anticipated state of dissatisfaction in the future. These findings highlight the importance of making schools much more attractive places to work. Principals and teachers who worked in the most challenging schools often felt that they were punished and that they had sacrificed professional status. In reversing this relationship, higher pay, visible respect, strong and supportive

principals who provide effective instructional leadership, and opportunities to collaborate in meaningful ways would be a good place to start.

#### **6.3.4 A Note on Policy Interventions and Structures**

While all these policy interventions can be highly effective, the study illustrates how complicated diverse schools can be and how different they are from one another. The four schools did not only vary greatly in their leadership, but they also varied in how they improved, learned collaboratively, and in how they were affected by the MOEC's mandates. Thus, there's no single model for schools, and yet MOEC continues in banking on a decidedly one-model operation for their reform. In addition, findings suggest that policy interventions are not likely to break the long-standing isolation and politics that most of these schools experience. They rather force school leaders to play a constant game of politics.

Principals also noted that policies and reforms continue to demand dramatic results on short timelines, frequently without providing the scaffolding that educators need to learn in order to achieve results. As evidence, the qualitative data show that the principals I interviewed were uncertain about how to make sense of and implement many of the change ideas in these or other reforms. Thus future development programmes need to provide a structure to scaffold principals' efforts to achieve program outcomes. Rather than simply mandating outcomes, these programmes could help principals learn how to achieve the desired outcomes.

The results also raised questions about whether it is reasonable to expect dramatic rather than incremental innovations as a result of structures that target practising leaders. Prior to ZEP, principals faced structural constraints that made dramatic changes an unrealistic expectation. They were responsible for a core set of functions that put demands on their time. The ZEP schools have introduced various structural changes such as smaller classes, free school meals, more teaching staff. These structures offer freedom to principals to transform their

practice from a managerial to an instructional emphasis. However, these alone are not likely to affect school performance. Often leaders cite these changes as part of 'their job'. But 'structural changes have not, do not now, and never will predict organizational performance' (Murphy, 2010, p. 96). The point is not that more teachers will not create success. But often it is teachers' commitment in providing high-quality teaching, principals' strong social purpose orientation and passion for change that is missing from successful schools. Where structural changes work, they do so because something important is happening inside the structures.

To successfully implement a comprehensive school reform, the present study shows that the existing structure and culture of the school should be taken as a starting point and then use the external accountability pressures in their favour to push the school in the direction of their ultimate vision (White-Smith and White, 2009). In Cyprus, initiatives such as ZEP work in some places and can be important tools in developing equity and excellence. However, without strong leadership, structures are unlikely to solve diverse schools' problems. The study showed that it is not the introduction of ZEP that has created any direct success, but it is the work of dedicated people sharing important values.

### 6.4 Summary

This chapter proposed a comprehensive model of leadership development. I argued that participants have not felt significantly better prepared after the completion of the programme. In fact principals noted that the development programme has not helped them understand how to develop equity and excellence as what they learned was not related to the work required in diverse contexts. Principals recommended the need for a revised curriculum closely connected with issues relating to equity and excellence. Principals also noted that programmes should connect theory and practice. They perceived that they can benefit more from field-based training than the typical classroom formats of coursework. More specifically, cohorts, problem-based learning, internships, and

mentoring could provide important and enriched learning experiences.

It was also emphasised that professional development alone cannot guarantee success. Principals and teachers must engage in CPL through which they can develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like. CPL involves not only reflection but also on having the courage to step outside existing ideologies and frameworks so that learning can take place in a new mind-set. To foster CPL leadership requires building internal accountability, trust, and psychological safety.

The study finally makes various policy propositions for enhancing equity and excellence in diverse schools. It was argued that schools with poor standards, curriculum, and assessment are more likely to stagnate. The autonomy gap places serious barriers to leadership for equity and excellence. Diverse schools require schools that revitalise and not work out the system as middle managers do. And finally, it was argued that the use of incentives in attracting effective teachers, although beneficial, offers only a quick fix solution. In the next chapter my conclusions and recommendations for further research are provided.

## CHAPTER

## 7

# Conclusion and Next Steps

This thesis has been framed with the important goal of understanding how leadership and diversity relate and was motivated by the promise of furthering the perspective of leadership as a social process (Crawford, 2008). Throughout, my goal has been to explore the role that leadership plays in developing equity and excellence. At the same time, I wanted to extend an understanding of what constitutes good leadership development in preparing leaders to deal with such issues. A number of leadership scholars have called for research on the leadership practices in diverse contexts (Evans, 2007a; Harris, 2009). Leaders face high levels of uncertainty and a need to mobilise and motivate teachers in developing equity and excellence. This concluding chapter addresses the overarching themes of this thesis, providing empirically based insights into how leadership tackles issues of diversity as well as how leaders can be developed to deal with such issues.

The study's findings acknowledge the critical role of school principals in driving change in complex settings. Additionally, this research extends the work on how leaders grapple with the realities of diversity in Cyprus's schools in order to develop equity and excellence. In doing so research demonstrates the collective dimensions of leadership (Drath, 2001; Harris, 2008; Spillane et al., 2002). It is also an acknowledgement that leadership is a collective and fluid activity in which different people at different times come forward to move the group in the direction it needs to go. By mapping and interpreting the data the study represents a useful first step in understanding equity and excellence in the diverse schools of Cyprus.

This final chapter examines the research questions in the light of the study, and sets out the key findings of the work. In Chapter 5, I suggested six leadership practices that synthesise a great deal of research about how leaders develop equity and excellence in schools. In Chapter 6 I proposed how to best prepare leaders to work in diverse contexts. In the sections below the findings of the research are discussed as a stimulus for further theorising. Finally, I will sum up the thesis in some final thoughts.

### 7.1 Limitations

Despite this study's contributions, there are a number of limitations that suggest new arenas of research. First, multiple-case-study research design, while important for its search for meaning and understanding, is limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator (Merriam, 1998). As Hamel (1993) observes:

the case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness...and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to the study. This lack of rigor is linked to the problems of bias... introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher. (p. 23)

However, I would argue that this argument misses the point of doing this type of research. While critiquing the new 'gold standard' of randomized controlled trials in educational research Shields (2007, as cited in Merriam, 1998) argues that:

the strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference – ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically – and most importantly humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, that it can and should qualify as the gold standard. (p. 13)



To ensure integrity I tried to get as close as possible to participants' understanding of the phenomenon. This was done through long interviews with various participants in each site and follow-up interviews. According to Merriam (1998) when a research begins to see or hear the same things over and over again, and no new information surfaces as he or she collects more data, it means that adequate engagement in data collection has been established. Along with the additional time spent collecting data, I also looked for variation or contrary explanations in understanding the leadership phenomenon. Patton (2002) argues that credibility hinges partially on the integrity of the research, and one approach to dealing with this issue is for the researcher to '*look for data that support alternative explanations*' (p. 553, emphasis in original).

Apart from ensuring integrity in case study research, analysing qualitative data also presented problems. Since only myself as a researcher collected the data, it is possible that the data have been filtered through my particular theoretical position and biases. In other words, deciding what was important – what I should or should not be attending to when collecting and analysing data – was almost always up to me. To ensure validity of the data every effort was made to ensure objectivity. All decisions about the research were made by me with careful, thoughtful reflection on the guidelines presented by experts in the field of qualitative research. For example, in achieving precise, trustworthy and compelling data analysis, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestions:

in doing qualitative analyses means living for as long as possible with that complexity and ambiguity, coming to terms with it, and passing on your conclusions to the reader in a form that clarifies and deepens understandings.

Despite the complexities involved during my engagement with data collection and analysis, qualitative data were appropriate for understanding respondents' leadership practices. Qualitative data were descriptive and the focus of this

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Next Steps

research was on participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they made sense of their lives. It is also important to note that interview data were a subjective reflection of leaders' perspectives and experiences, rather than objective accounts of reality. The attempt was therefore to understand not one, but multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In ensuring internal validity various methods had been used. First, triangulation of different sources of data including observations, survey and documents analysis has been used. Second, I used member checking where the informant served as a check throughout the analysis process. Thus, an ongoing dialogue regarding my interpretations of the informant reality and meaning ensured the truth-value of the data. Future work could include more participatory modes of research where the informant is involved in most phases of the study, from the design of the project to checking interpretations and conclusions.

In ensuring reliability I tried to ensure that results were consistent with the data collected. As such I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) conceptualisation of reliability in qualitative research as 'dependability' or 'consistency'. I therefore made sure that given the data collected the result made sense – they were consistent and dependable. The primary strategy utilised to ensure external validity was the provision of 'sufficient descriptive data' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 298) so that anyone interested in transferability will have a solid framework for comparison (Merriam, 1998). As different cases of the same phenomenon were compared (predominantly and diverse schools), the results of the analysis, I could argue, could be transferable to other diverse schools. However, these schools were selected from a group of schools that received an award. The criterion for the award was that the selected schools have managed to 'take risk away from youth' which made this population perfect for examining successful leadership practices. This selection therefore makes the schools non-representatives. Future work could include a more representative sample of schools to see whether they also engage in these kinds of practices or in altogether different ones. However, the findings could be transferable to some

extent to other national settings, as indicated by the number of studies described in the discussion section that have identified results similar to mine. Given my exploratory qualitative approach and small sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution until they have been replicated in a variety of settings and with multiple methodologies.

Throughout my work there was a relentless critique of my research activities, including those ways I represent reality. By interrogating my own position there is a chance of being more 'vigilant about my practices' (Spivak, 1984, p. 84) a move that I perceive as a necessary precursor to producing knowledge from which to act (Lather, 1991). Reflexivity then becomes a resource in my work. Reflexivity is referred to the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the "human instrument" (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p. 183). This research allowed me to continue to reflect on my attempt to understand leaders' work and perhaps my own transition from primary teaching to doing research at a doctoral level. Having knowledge of leadership practices and diversity provided me with valuable resources on which to draw during my research in the schools. There is a sense in which a good deal of the research that I have been involved in since leaving primary teaching has, at some acknowledged and unacknowledged levels, turned on attempts to make sense of my own teaching and other experiences.

Prior to this research I predicted that school stakeholders would see me as an insider given my familiarity with schools and the fact that I had some experience as a primary teacher. In fact, during the early phases of this research I realised that participants viewed me as an insider because of my teaching background. In addition, the fact that I was younger and not an authority figure within the system of primary education also served as an advantage in finding common ground and developing rapport. I quickly felt that the data I was gathering was unlimited and felt a sense of satisfaction. These experiences show that I was actually embedded into my research activities even if I was striving to ensure 'objective rigor' in the development and application of my academic studies. It was clear that issues of

power and identity interact in complex ways shaping the presentation of the interviewer's self to participants. My educational status and gender have contributed towards the nature of data elicited through their influence on the intersubjectivity of myself as researcher and the research.

Reflecting from these experiences I reject the idea that social research is or can be carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the biography of the researcher, in such a way that its findings can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics. This could also be seen in my interview procedures. Although the interviews carried out in the present research were based on interview protocol, there were times that interview questions were emergent and progressed in line with my intuition. Learmonth (2006) suggests 'with research interviews there is always an undecidability that disables mastery' (p. 94). Interviews in 'real life' may be somewhat different from how it is traditionally construed. 'Research interviews can be unpredictable and sometimes produce the unexpected (Learmonth, 2006, p.509). My argument is that knowledge is produced in specific social circumstances that shape it in some way, and acknowledgement of this complex social process offered greater potential for both transparency and, ultimately, accountability in the research process.

## **7.2 The Role of Leadership in Developing Equity and Excellence in the Diverse Schools of Cyprus**

This research suggests that the gap between diverse schools' complex demands and leaders' complexity of mind is wide and growing. School leaders were found to change the way they framed, they derived meaning, and they interpreted the multiple messages they received from their school environments. The findings demonstrated that the ability to push against engrained assumptions and perceptions about the work of leadership in diverse schools necessitates a transformation of belief systems. Those who successfully transformed became able to step outside their own ideologies and frameworks and made qualitative

shifts in the ways they understood themselves and their work. As principals in Cyprus's contexts face a host of complex demands as they strive to implement lasting, meaningful change in their diverse school environments, these demands often require a personal development many adults may not have. Thus, future professional development programmes could provide avenues for identifying, reflecting on, and altering one's core beliefs. However, little is known on how to help leaders develop these capacities in adults (Helsing et al., 2008).

The research began to draw out the process through which principals turn the idea of values at the heart of the school strategy – from an abstraction on a paper to an operating reality. As leaders managed to close the gap between espoused values and behaviours they became more able to put values into strategy, connect values with social purpose and transmit them through open dialogues and communication. Additionally, when principals made meaningful contributions in their work and life, teachers saw it and became more inclined to follow them in their commitment to diversity. In this way leaders became concerned in making their social purpose-leadership orientation visible to maximise the beneficial impact of equity and excellence. In so doing, principals seemed to propel innovation and change throughout the system. The findings indicate that understanding how leadership infuses meaning, values and purpose is an underdeveloped area of leadership research but, I suggest, a potentially rich and fruitful area of inquiry (Glynn and Dejordy, 2010). Thus more research is needed in order to find how leaders' priorities, principles and values affect leaders' decision-making processes.

The study's findings suggest that schools committed to equity and excellence share certain qualities that make them distinguishable, adaptive and responsive to diversity challenges. In the case study schools complacency was avoided, authority was exceeded, and followers were highly involved. Leaders were also seen making a case for change by cultivating discontent with the current reality, and at the same time developing a vision of a more attractive future. Effective leaders also managed to move beyond expectations and did not stay close up to

their authority position. They challenged social order and sought innovation and change. The study has also demonstrated that both leaders and followers can act as agents for change. Specifically, effective followers actively influenced their leaders through constructive challenge and upward communication in an attempt to advance positive change in their schools. Although the current work links to, and extends the role of followers in the leadership equation (e.g. Kellerman, 2008), a better understanding is needed of what 'followership' is. Such a perspective will help 'reverse the lens' (Shamir et al., 2007) in leadership research by addressing the role that followers play in creating and maintaining effective followership and leadership outcomes.

The study also identifies various leadership interventions necessary to help people in the system address diversity challenges. Specifically, in practising leadership for equity and excellence, Cyprus's school leaders have made various interventions to help people in the organisations mobilise towards both equity and excellence. Leaders established communication throughout the system, changed school culture and acted politically. These interventions were necessary in understanding relationships and concerns among school stakeholders. Thus leadership for equity and excellence is not just about changing the way we think about school leadership and reform (Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy, 2005), but also focusing on the action: the practice of leadership in different ways and at different points in time.

This study sheds new light on the effects of social identity on school leaders working in the diverse schools of Cyprus. In its effort to understand the challenge leaders face when bridging group differences in the context of Cyprus schools with a history of intergroup tensions, it extends the social identity theory (Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy, 2009; Hogg, 2001) in several ways. Leadership and identity involved shaping awareness and action in both terms of acknowledging difference and finding points of commonality. For instance, it was seen that the more strongly minority groups identified with the school and the more important the school was to one's identity and sense of self, the more

one was influenced by leaders who were perceived as prototypical of the group. In the process of building shared identity, leaders incorporated a number of tactics in their daily work. In their dealings with different groups, they engaged in different tactics: creating a safe space, building a shared identity, emphasising a shared fate, and embedding groups within the larger whole. This research also indicates that when diversity exists in a school, often the challenge for leaders is to reconcile the typical preferences of the majority group (assimilation) and of minority groups for pluralistic (multicultural) integration. Leaders used cooperation, in which success required capitalising on the unique strengths of each group, and satisfied both the majority group's desire for common identity and the minority group's needs for positive distinctiveness. Thus, to lead across differences, leaders need to recognise and appreciate the different perspectives and motivations of the members of different groups.

In narrowing the gap between aspirations and what actually goes on in schools principals were also seen bringing conflicts to the surface and having teachers themselves work them through. In a similar vein, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) argue that a successful approach to conflict is one which:

teases out the *unacknowledged* differences in perspectives on the work issues that may be preventing the organisation from reaching its espoused aspiration. It requires acknowledging the many competing visions, values, and views that may be alive in the organisation even if they are not articulated. (p. 150)

The study's findings then suggest that principals, who identify conflicts and deflect attention to the real work of teachers, rather than working the conflict themselves as an authority, are more likely to generate progress.

The study suggests that school leaders can have a significant influence on teachers' classroom practices through their efforts to motivate teachers and create workplace settings compatible with instructional practices known to be effective.

Research indicates that teachers want to feel that their concerns about student conduct, discipline and students' emotional support are heard and, as much as possible, addressed in concrete terms. Day et al. (2004, as cited in Dat et al., 2009) provide similar evidence about the powerful effects of teacher working conditions on teacher emotions and their classroom practices. The case studies suggested that schools organised for student and teacher learning were successful, considering the high-need students for whom a personalised, intellectually challenging and meaningful experience at school was most essential if they were to succeed. Such schools were also found much more able to attract and retain teachers, as they were satisfying places in which to learn and work. Ultimately, teachers and students want most of all to be efficacious, which is why supportive teaching and learning conditions were found to be so important to retention. However, the findings suggest that to achieve more personalised school settings, teachers still require adequate time to create strong instruction together. Thus, MOEC has to flatten administrative hierarchies and restructure time and staffing so that teachers have regular time to work with others in every school.

Successful school principals were also found to pay significant attention to classroom instructional practices. This is consistent with previous studies that suggest the importance of instructional leadership (McKenzie, Skrla and Scheurich, 2006). While successful leadership involves significant attention to classroom instructional practices, the study suggests that leadership in diverse contexts also includes attention to other issues critical to the health and welfare of Cyprus's schools. Additionally, to judge from the experiences of the four schools in this thesis, the pursuit towards excellence seems to depend on teachers' focus on relationships with students. Regarding relationships, teachers need to be caring, sensitive and supportive, but they also need to insist, even demand, that students work hard, not give up in the face of difficulty, and strive for excellence.



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The case studies also highlight some of the tensions between equity and excellence. In particular, in my small sample I discovered that not all schools promoted equity and excellence, with some schools promoting either one or the other. In other words, there was an obvious debate over standards, expressed as conflict between equity and excellence. Most schools were most successful in promoting equity rather than excellence. Successful leadership, however, needs to promote both. The two predominantly minority schools that were found to hold leadership for equity orientation promoted the success of all students by insisting on high expectations from all members of the school community, acceptance of different points of view, and procedural fairness. However, these schools called for classrooms in which standards are clearly articulated and maintained. Though mindful of the injustices that can occur in the name of standards, these schools complained that standards were not clearly articulated. The study suggests when standards are employed fairly they can facilitate learning.

Diversity leadership commitment has a thread of emotion running through it. Schools in the study showed that social emotional learning does not mean focusing on what is 'wrong' with the individual child and what can be done to change the child. Instead, attention could be directed away from the equal if not more critical aspects of what can be done to change the social contexts and cultural systems in which the child is a participant – those that highlight deficiencies and make them significant in the first place (Graczyk et al., 2000). As long as social emotional learning promotes a view of social and emotional competencies as individual abilities or deficiencies, the 'what works' question cannot generate a new level of focus on social contexts of learning and achievement and the importance of emotion as a key element of those contexts.

My first research question sought to shed light into leadership practices in diverse schools. Specifically, I tried to provide a more robust understanding of how leaders make sense of and address diversity challenges in the Cyprus context. Previous studies highlight that such efforts will benefit considerably

from more finely ingrained understandings than we presently have of successful leadership practices in disadvantaged settings. Although there is a great deal of continuity with enduring tasks performed by leaders, this research identifies six leadership practices that leaders use to deal with diversity. However, principals in more disadvantaged school settings are likely to need more professional development and support in their efforts to sustain practices and behaviours that will increase the involvement of teachers and parents in the work towards equity and excellence. The next section identifies the main findings related to the second research question.

### **7.3 Leadership Development**

Meeting the challenge of improving achievement in Cyprus's diverse schools, depends, in part, on school leaders who are prepared to lead teachers and students to a new level of performance. The study suggests that not all leaders are prepared to carry out these daunting tasks. The curriculum offered to school principals does not prepare them to be better at managing diversity. Future programmes could push leaders to reflect and analyse generally how to evaluate teachers, give feedback to teachers, and guide and lead teachers in instruction. Additionally, those involved in classroom-based training and development could enrich leadership development by discussing all of the six leadership practices described earlier in Chapter 6.

The programme offers limited transfer of learning to the real world of schools where leaders work in complex contexts. Principals expressed their view that professional practitioners would benefit more from actively engaging with coherent content and other members of their organisation or professional group, and from sustained opportunities to reflect on and apply new knowledge in their work situation. In fact, in many countries, development programmes are moving from traditional course-based designs to experiential methods. The new leadership development will require dramatic changes in past practices, often offered and developed in intellectually and successful programmes, connected in

the practical work of school. Field-based learning could include group cohorts, problem-based learning, internships, and mentoring. Research participants suggested that cohort-style learning could be especially beneficial in increasing academic motivation, social support and reflection of future candidates. Within such a professional community, principals could make sense of programme content through guided exchanges with knowledgeable others and colleagues. In programmes around the world, 'what we know for certain is that cohorts have been around for more than two decades, and no one is claiming that this structural feature is a panacea to address the defects in school leadership preparation' (McCarthy and Forsyth, 2009, p. 98). Internships could also offer a number of advantages including the use of authentic problems, collaborative work on such problems, modelling effective processes and feedback to candidates.

Despite the fact that effective professional development was lacking in most of the case study schools, what made them successful was Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL). The ability to create and successfully manage CPL stood out as one of the key capabilities of successful schools. Perhaps the most important professional learning principle found to enhance CPL was that of internal accountability. Successful schools were found to resist the self-defeating, self-comforting stance of the compliance orientation and adopted instead CPL. In the four case study schools leaders knew where they stood on the compliance orientation – CPL orientation continuum. But even more importantly everyone involved in supporting the school had explicit knowledge that this continuum exists. Despite the high levels of compliance in schools, I would suggest that more research is required on whether or not the MOEC reinforces the compliance orientation, and what are the leaders perceptions towards this orientation.

The successful principals in my study were also entrepreneurial in taking charge of their development, and in seeking out experiences and relationships from which they can learn. To counter the problem of isolation and get serious about CPL, support providers could get themselves organised to infuse diverse schools

with more expert and explicit knowledge about how organisations like theirs develop. Support and joint CPL could break schools' isolation with consistent, well-matched infusions of expertise about organisational development and increasingly sophisticated pedagogy. This kind of support could enrich schools' capacity to think strategically about CPL as a means of developing their organisations.

A number of models of leadership posit attributes, functions or relations that are core to leadership and are implicitly or explicitly universal (i.e. important and applicable in most situations). In fact core leadership practices that have been identified by previous research (Leithwood et al., 2007) provide a great deal of continuity with enduring tasks performed by leaders. It is my belief that it is hard to imagine what leadership is if there is not a core set of leadership functions or behaviours that cut across different contexts. Additionally, context-specific models would necessarily become more complex as research identifies different theories of leadership for different situations.

Meanwhile, it is hard to argue that effective leadership is not dependent on context. Louis et al. (2010) state that 'one size fits all' approaches to leadership and leadership development are no longer adequate (p. 101). The study demonstrates that context certainly impacts challenging settings, and leaders, in turn, influence various contextual factors. The findings suggest that leaders who are successful in schools over a long period of time have become skilled at either adapting to or influencing the contextual forces within complex environments. In fact, leaders can be quite adept at modifying and switching the behaviours to adapt to the situation.

This research therefore identifies certain leadership features that the research suggests are useful and could be present not only in the context of diverse schools but also in leadership development programmes. The findings from this research also support calls against the blanket implementation of universalistic models of leadership and leadership development. Instead, this research calls for

the facilitation of a more constructionist approach to leadership in diverse contexts. From this research I identified a strong desire for inclusive and participative leadership founded in social purpose and collectivist principles and considered the unique context of Cyprus; a country with a history of culture intersections and now a popular destination for new immigrants. I propose that more work is required on such notions, both in Cyprus and in other countries and through such dialogue we may be able to develop theories and approaches that are not only relevant in a Cypriot context but that may contribute in a significant way to leadership theory and development in other parts of the world. Additionally, because my findings focus on a core concern of most leadership theories – raising educational achievement and making productive use of students' differences – it can draw from, connect with, and contribute to more general theories and models.

### **7.4 Policy**

One powerful theme the four schools shared was that of policy for quality and equity. Deep-rooted changes and transformations are unlikely to be achieved without some radical, long-term change in policies. Common themes in the case study schools were a need for leaner and more disciplined standards, thoughtful curriculum guidance, useful assessments and intelligent accountability systems. It could be that encouraging more performance-oriented measures of student achievement is critical to closing the achievement gap. Although data alone will not lead to better instruction or higher student achievement, good information can help principals to make decisions about how to use their resources, plan professional development and improve their own practices.

Currently the school level autonomy is low and this constrains what is possible. Principals not only have little control on staffing and budget decisions but they also have little control over instructional decisions. Although the MOEC has quietly granted school principals the capacity of leading some instructional changes, clarification over control of instruction is needed. Control of

instructional process – whether in the form of curriculum, instruction or assessment – is a critical issue for the future. Recruitment incentives could also be used to attract and retain expert, experienced teachers in diverse schools. As it was noted in the case studies, schools receive no compensation for their accomplishments and for their additional responsibilities, and principals suggested that some kind of reward would be highly desirable. Incentives alone are unlikely to work without changing the dysfunctional school environments that often pervade schools. Incentives will attract effective teachers but they are unlikely to remain if the work is not satisfying. Akerlof and Kranton (2010) note that satisfaction with one's workplace, intrinsic rewards, such as capable colleagues and recognition for good work, play a larger role in worker satisfaction than extrinsic rewards such as monetary compensation. They not only emphasised the error of thinking that a high-performance economy could be based on self-interest alone but they warned of the overuse of incentives that appeal to individual gain. As was seen in the case studies, the true source of satisfaction for principals was finding out that they have changed the lives of their students. Thus, incentives alone are unlikely to produce change. Solutions for education could address not only the structural instability of institutions, but also these problems in the hearts and minds of people who work in it – problems that may otherwise persist for many years.

The work also highlighted that schools are not likely to improve only because they are subject to interventions of the MOEC. Rather MOEC's mandate set in motion a complex chain of events that are unlikely to improve teaching and learning. Because this chain of events is often made up of unique cultural, historical, organisational and professional characteristics of each school, they are not likely to work because no two schools are the same. Thus not all underperforming schools are the same. In fact, these schools vary in many ways, including school leadership, how they respond to the requirements of MOEC's goals, and school composition.

## 7.5 Future Research

International diversity has been a largely missing element from the set of educational equity issues that have gained increasing prominence in the Western educational leadership discourse in the past years. Therefore, an international perspective would make a substantial and important contribution towards incorporating international perspectives into an existing research discourse on educational leadership for equity and excellence. We can learn a great deal about the opportunities and challenges that leaders face by considering an international perspective in education. As Pittinsky (2010) notes, 'whatever the situation in which one seeks to understand or advance intergroup leadership, one joins a diverse community that is trying to influence the course of organisational life in new ways through leadership' (p. xxii). Thus, exploring the complexities of leadership in a wide range of situations is needed.

More empirical work about the connections between leadership and diversity could help social movements and leadership researchers develop further nuances in their understanding of leadership agency in social change. More compelling ways of assessing values as well as assessing meaning is required before drawing definitive conclusions about the impact of values in schools. Future research is also needed that explores how robust the leadership development factors identified in this thesis are in terms of truly influencing outcomes. There are also likely to be numerous other qualities for leadership development programmes that have been overlooked. Thus, future research is needed to rigorously tease apart the many factors pointing to successful leadership development and to provide a deeper sense of the impact of individual dimensions.

Also, more research is needed on the effects of school composition on leadership practices. To accomplish this, comparative studies of predominantly white and diverse schools are needed, following schools through time, and interpreting how their leaders negotiate, develop and change their collective identities in their struggles towards equity and excellence. In addition, carrying out some of these

recommendations for future research may require rigorous research designs and the challenging of some generally accepted pieces of wisdom within the field. However, a more thorough investigation of diversity and leadership along these lines is critical to our gaining a thorough understanding of leadership in general. The truth is that we need more attention on how leadership improves schools in these specific contexts. All plausible ideas for equitable leadership practices deserve serious consideration.

## **7.6 Some Final Thoughts**

As schools do not exist in isolation, and are part of the larger society, schooling requires the active participation of many, including students, families, public officials, local organisations, and the larger community. For instance, it was shown that the learning opportunities before children enter schools substantially predict their success or failure. Children's readiness to learn can influence both teachers' perceptions of the potential of less-prepared children, and students' own self-confidence and perceived abilities, all of which have cumulative effects on motivation and learning. Families therefore must do their part to get children ready for school. They must remain involved with their children, encourage them, monitor their schoolwork and encourage them to take their schooling seriously. In addition, policy makers must take account of neighbourhood-level conditions that diminish the impact of 'full-service' schooling efforts in high-poverty neighbourhoods. We know that learning doesn't begin and end at the classroom door and that children spend the majority of their time outside school. For many, particularly those in the most distressed schools and neighbourhoods, there are few options after the last bell rings. There is also little opportunity for them to participate in enriching learning programmes during the summer months – not remediation but the kind of programmes that other children take for granted and that can stave off the 'summer learning loss' that contributes so heavily to the achievement gap between poorer and more affluent students.

Thus, seeing that there are many factors involved other than leadership that play



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a significant part in determining organisation outcomes, it can be concluded that there are obviously times when the situation overwhelms anything a leader might do. Even gifted and committed principals work within systems of policies, incentives, training and support that can either help or hinder their efforts. But there is no doubt that many unqualified, incompetent bad leaders are still occupying leadership roles, and the cost of their neglect in the most neediest schools and communities will never be known with any precision. Considering the damage done to schools by ineffective leadership, and the possibilities for high-quality and equitable education in leadership such as that described in this thesis, it seems obvious that it is important to invest in developing leadership talent.

This research engaged in understanding what leadership for equity and excellence is, why it matters, and how is it done. Efforts to reform education must not diminish the quality of leaders but instead turn their attention towards helping leadership to improve diverse schools in every way possible. It must be emphasised that with the increasing immigration flows, this is not the time for complacency. Leadership for equity and excellence can flourish under any condition when its theme fundamentally supports meaningful values and principles shared by many societies. Banks et al. (2005) note that:

there are some beliefs and attitudes that are critical for teachers to be effective with all students, including respect for all learners and their experiences, confidence in their abilities to learn, a willingness to question and change one's own practices if they are not successful in a given case, and a commitment to continue seeking new solutions to learning problems.  
(p. 253)

Here I propose that the same holds true for leaders who are working towards equity and excellence. Modelling the kind of leadership suggested in this thesis while pushing followers towards equitable teaching and learning is a practice that could move us closer to this goal. The study concludes that there is no single

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answer towards excellence and equity. But if leaders want to improve education, they must first of all have a vision for crossing the divide. If they do, then leadership practices proposed and discussed in this thesis are only the start.

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# **Appendix A**

## **Interview Protocol**

The protocol below was used for interviews with school leaders.

### **General Questions**

Describe your school environment.

As you think about your school, consider what inequities might exist. How do you describe the behaviour of formal and non-formal leaders? How do you describe your behaviour?

How long have you been working in this school? How were you recruited/why did you choose to work in this school?

What are your current strengths?

What skills do you need to develop in this area?

What successes would you point out in terms of your work thus far?

What challenges do you see ahead? How are you trying to approach these?

Can you tell me about how your leadership (the principal's leadership) has developed over this time?

What did you see as the school's strengths and needs when you started working here?

What do you see as the school's current strengths and needs?

What have you been focusing on in terms of school improvement?

What are your goals for the school?

The evidence presented to us indicates that the school has remained successful.

To what do you attribute this?

(a) What are the principals' experiences with implementing ZEP? (b) What are the specific challenges these principals face? and (c) How did the principals negotiate these challenges?

## **Diversity**

What is your responsibility or job role in relation to diversity and leadership in this school?

What do you do/say when fellow educators talk about students at this school in ways that are unhealthy?

How does your culture affect the students who come to your classroom?

How do you import new ideas and approaches into the school?

What is your value for people different from you or like you?

What assumptions do you make about those who are different from you?

What beliefs do you have about those who are like or different from you?

How did the school reach its current position in diversity and quality?

What are the activities/initiatives that are implemented in order to reach diversity goals?

How are teachers involved in the design and implementation of diversity policies and practices?

How would you define the current state of your organisation with regard to embracing diversity and supporting equality?

As you think about your school, what inequities might exist?

What values, beliefs, behaviours, language, class, race/ethnicity, and worldview do the various students bring to the school?

What opportunities exist in everyday interactions for faculty and students to get to know people from other racial or ethnic groups?

What forces within your school promote cultural learning? What forces inhibit or impede cultural learning?

## **Leadership**

Please describe how your experience as a headteacher in this school has changed over the past few years.

How do you try to communicate your goals to others?

What are the top five leadership principles required for success in your school?

How well does your current approach to development meet the needs of the school?

What gaps are there in the current approach to development?

What have you done, tried to do, or hope to do that would support your effort to attain the goals of the school?

How would characterise the quality of teaching and learning at this school? How rigorous is it?

Consider one or two teachers whom you think are exceptionally good teachers. What characteristics do those individuals have? What strategies do you use to try to develop these abilities in other teachers?

How would you characterise the teachers overall in this school?

What are some specific things you have tried to do or would like to do to enhance the overall teaching quality at your school?

In what ways do teachers spend time working together?

How would you characterise the quality of teaching at this school?

### **Future**

What would you like to see in the development strategy for the school that is currently missing?

What opportunities exist in everyday interactions for faculty and students to get to know people from other racial or ethnic groups?

### **Development Programme**

What influence, if any, would you say that [the principal development programme] has had on your ability to meet the challenges you've faced as a school principal?

What are the programme's strengths?

What do you think are the programme's areas of weakness? Be specific.

How can the programme improve its ability to prepare effective headteachers?

Overall, what do you think the programme is most successful at accomplishing?

Overall, what do you think are the programme's areas of weakness? Be specific. Can you give examples?

What would you like to see in the development strategy that is currently missing?

How well prepared are you to work with diverse learners?

What is the key programme feature that allows you to accomplish this?

How well prepared are graduates to build learning communities?

What about your capacity to work with parents and community members?

Overall, how well prepared do you think graduates are to assume the role of the principal?

What has been your greatest professional development as a headteacher? Why was it valuable?

Could you describe the kinds of professional development you have experienced and/or lead?

Has the nature of your professional development changed in the past couple of years?

If so, how? And, how has this affected you and your teaching practice?

What are your particular skills and knowledge strengths? Weaknesses?

What is your impression about teachers' attitudes and participation in professional development activities at this school?

### **Policy**

What are the key areas where you feel autonomy is required in order to operate your school programme successfully? In other words, what types of things do you (or your school) need control over in order to be effective?

In these areas, do you have the autonomy you need? Can you give me an example of how you've used that autonomy to implement and/or improve your school's programme? If not: What are the barriers to obtaining autonomy in these key areas?

Are there any areas where you believed, initially, that you would have autonomy, but in reality, you didn't?

# **Appendix B**

## **Survey Instruments**

### **PART A**

Gender: Male/Female

Age:

### **PART B**

#### **This school...**

Has a policy against racist language and behaviour

Provides opportunities for people to describe their cultural groups to others.

Has a formal selection process for materials that are inclusive.

Display materials that have culturally diverse images.

Promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among people.

Promote activities that recognise that there are differences within ethnic groups.

Use effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations.

Have policies that prohibit discrimination.

Encourage students and school employees to talk about differences without making judgements.

Encourage cooperative learning strategies as a technique to get students to work and play together.

Teach students in their native language.

Provide workshops on different cultures for all school staff.

Teach how to acknowledge the differences among people based on ethnicity.

**Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the Ministry of Education and Culture**

Often I find it difficult to agree with the MEC's policies on important matters relating to cultural diversity

MEC's expectations are too high for our school

MEC supports schools to improve

MEC encourages headteachers to take risks in order to make change

MEC helps me promote and nurture a focus on teaching and learning

**PART C**

**How effectively did your formal leadership programme prepare you to do the following?**

Understand how different students learn and how to teach them successfully.

Evaluate curriculum materials for their usefulness in supporting learning.

Evaluate teachers and provide instructional feedback to support their improvement.

Develop broad agreement among staff about the school's mission.

Mobilise the school staff to foster social justice in serving all students.

Develop a clear set of ethical principles to guide decision making.

Create a collaborative-learning organisation.

Use data to monitor school progress, identify problems, and propose solutions.

Engage staff in a decision-making process about school curriculum and policies.

Engage self-improvement and continuous learning.

Handle discipline and support services.

Find and allocate resources to pursue important school goals

Create and maintain an orderly, purposeful learning environment.

Work with parents to support students' learning.

Collaborate with to others outside the school for assistance and partnership.

**PART D**

**Please indicate the extent to which you feel each statement describes your school.**

Teachers in this school feel responsible to help each other do their best.

Teachers in this school are continually learning and seeking new ideas.

Teachers use time together to discuss teaching and learning.

Students work hard in this school.

Students who struggle or fall behind get needed support.

Students are aware of the expectations in this school.

All students have access to expert teaching and a high-quality curriculum.

Teachers take an active role in school-wide decision making.

The school has an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems.

Good practices are shared across classrooms.

Teachers in this school are continually learning and seeking new ideas.

Teachers collect and use data to improve their teaching.

Teachers use time together to discuss teaching and learning.

The nature and process of student learning is a focus for discussion among teaching staff.

Teachers in this school feel responsible for helping one another do their best.

Teachers strongly support the changes we have undertaken at this school



# Appendix C

## Transcripts

**ATHENA**

**School principal – Marcos**

### **INTERVIEW ROUND 2**

**Where did you place your attention when you first arrived at the school?**

When I first came here, the school and the curriculum especially had to become multicultural. The school had a quiet agreement with the Ministry to change curriculum aims without missing certain material. The material requires more improvement but it has really improved in the last couple of years. However there should be more differentiation for each school. For example, the MOEC should take into account the characteristics of the school. Here we have students from all over world, with the majority coming from Georgia. Cypriots are the minority.

**How about the aims of the school?**

The aims come from the main goals of MOEC but they are in harmony with the school goals. They are differentiated in the implementation due to school peculiarities. The basic aim is for students to read, write and talk correctly. The rest of the practices regarding other school subjects are the same as in other schools. Due to school composition, one language aim is the knowledge of Greek language. Having this aim as a base, we try and extend towards other aims that focus on emotions. These aims are necessary if students are to accommodate in the environment in which they came to live. And through children, we are hoping to achieve the integration of their parents.

**Can you describe the strategy towards the achievement of these goals?**

Knowledge comes second in this school. First comes the integration of students into the school environment. In other words we pay attention to their emotions and in their

socialisation in the school. The teachers who come to the school get inspired from the same values and visions of the school. Upon arrival of new teachers they become immunised with the beliefs of the school. We make lots of discussions to open up minds. The values of the school give us ground to work on. They are very important to that process.

### **How are decisions taken?**

Decisions are taken in cooperation with teachers. Teachers are part of decision-making processes and therefore everyone feels responsible to students. However, the principal is the spokesperson for the school, he represents the school and its expertise to the outside world and keeps outside stakeholders informed on its progress. Teachers don't see that. They see don't see the forest. They see it blurred. I have a good picture of the methods that will be used, the curriculum material, discipline issues, relationships with students, MOEC and other stakeholders.

So in the classroom we use various strategies through pictures and movements, theater cultivation and dancing. We aim on emotional goals rather than knowledge-base goals. We make everything possible for these students to express themselves.....When you have a hole filled up with weed, you have to clean up the weed for the water to run. Thus children cannot learn unless we take all that pressure which disengages them from learning.

### **Describe one of your biggest challenge.**

We push for differentiation in the curriculum and for the development of new curriculum material. We are also constantly asking the teacher development so that they can teach in the Greek language. Teachers should receive much of the training on site-rather than taking off a teacher's Friday afternoon to the Pedagogical Institute. Job-embedded professional development provided by staff development teachers located at each school site is the ideal. Trainers must be hired within the school buildings and during work hours to ensure that all teachers could access the courses.

**How did you try to overcome these issues? How do you increase quality teaching and learning?**

The use of technology has really helped us. In particular, teaching has been made easier with the new technology-blackboards. Meanwhile, we have to accept that not only cultural diverse people do not have the same opportunities as us, they work more than us....because they are economic migrants, they don't come here because they love us, they don't come here for holidays...they are economic migrants.. So their first priority is work and not their students education. Because we know that these students do not have the necessary help in their home environments we give extra help after school.

**Can you talk about the various collaborative used that the school follows?**

The isolation that exists in other schools, it doesn't exist in our school. The challenges that teachers face are so many that he or she has to share it with other teachers. We have lots of meetings, implementations, sharing of ideas on teaching topics.

**Talk to me about resources.**

School resources are not enough. We need more money for technology. However, I have lots connections with business people outside the school context.

**So you get extra funding from sources outside the school context. Where do you invest these resources?**

Field trips. Students have to see the outside world. They are very isolated in this neighborhood. They never get the chance to see the outside.

**Can you talk to me about principal selection?**

They never asked me if I had the knowledge and skills to work here. I was just a principal who happened to like the subject and on my own or due to my character I came to look like this for the purpose of this school. The MOEC has not offered me any specialised course or development opportunities.

**LEANDER**

**School teacher**

## **INTERVIEW ROUND 2**

**What are the main goals of this school?**

We do not participate in the objectives that come from the MOEC. These objectives are given and we are simply the executants, either we believe it or not. Apart from MOEC objective we have our own goals but these are heavily influenced in their achievement because if you do not believe in these objectives or they do not express you, there is no reason of following them. Something else, which is very difficult, is that these [MOEC's] goals change every year. It is not reasonable to meet these goals in one year. Also, it is not an easy task to change four goals every year. If you compare it with the Finnish educational system some goals remain for many years until they are achieved. Their aims are not as numerous as ours.

**In the previous interview you said that Elpida is a 'democratic principal'. Can you talk to me a bit more about her leadership style?**

Mrs Elpida is democratic but I think she should be more strict. A strict, a decisive leader who knows how to take the school from here to there. By a strict leader I don't mean an authoritarian leader but a decisive one.... Elpida is a good person and hard-working, and because she is a good person, it influences her in managing some situations which she should have commanded. If a principal can't make the right decision quickly and effectively the school will lose quickly. But again her leadership style might be better because she avoids conflict –may be with my inexperience and in my eagerness to complete certain aims I would be in conflict all the time. In a diverse school you have to be decisive, and with high levels of flexibility because situations are changing every day –you can't comply.

She has to bring the school outward, bring parents in creatively. It is important that parents get involved in the work of the school not as observers but in a more creative way. The school principal must have excellent relationships with parent associates, must be able to find resources, deal with conflict, racist behaviours...

**The principal mentioned that you have been an acting principal for a short-time period. Can you describe how was it like to lead a diverse school as an acting principal?**

When I was an acting principal for two weeks I realised that a good principal ceases to be an educator –he or she is a manager and he or she must have all the characteristics of a scientist who leads a ‘business’. The school is like managing a business. You want to take it from here to there and at the same you need to have results. So you need to have these skills – communication, dialogue, public relations...

I also realised that is useful to deliberately step back from a performance leadership role to a more indirect and advisory one. Diverse schools do not need such strong organisational structures such as those found in other schools.

**Do you believe that there is enough collaboration and professional learning at the school?**

Yes I think there is a strong emphasis on professional collaboration among teachers, and principals. Teachers need to work together to improve teaching and learning. Elpida is also part of the process. However, teachers need more professional development and MOEC doesn’t provide that for everyone. Seminars are voluntary.

**How in your view can these problems be resolved?**

The MOEC definitely needs to train both teachers and principals on how to manage cultural differences or even how to manage a heterogeneous school composition – minorities, students living in poverty, students in challenging home environments. They have to become familiar with the needs and characteristics of their school compositions and what these students need.